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Sexualities

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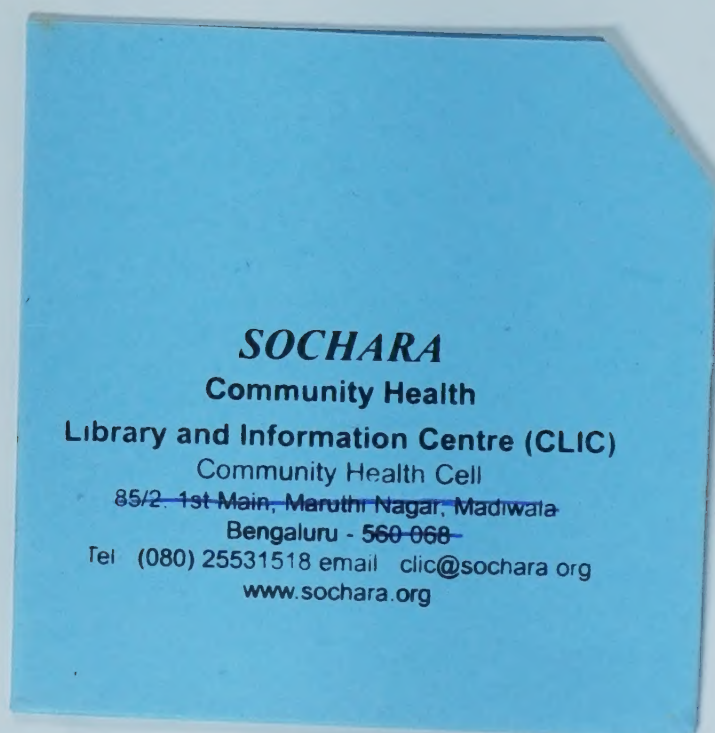
AN ADVANCED
TRAINING RESOURCE

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Ewan McKay Armstrong
and Peter Gordon



Sexualities



An advanced
training resource

THIS BOOK MUST BE RETURNED BY
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Dedication

Sexualities is dedicated to
the memory of our good friend
Mike Rhodes (1947-1991)
who knew this stuff backwards
and used it daily to help others
find a place in the world.

We love and miss him a lot.

Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to the development and production of *Sexualities*.

First of all, we would like to thank Joyce Rosser, formerly Deputy Head of the Education and Training Unit of the UK FPA, whose commitment and encouragement got us started. Mary Porter and Gill Lenderyou have sustained this commitment over the past three years, their enthusiasm keeping us going when we so easily could have given up.

Some of the exercises in the manual have been developed over the years by FPA tutors and other colleagues. In particular we would like to acknowledge Val Davies on whose work the *Sexuality awareness* exercise (Chapter 4) is based, Marie Faire and Beryl Heather on whose work we have based the *Asking open ended questions* exercise (Chapter 1) and Wendy Clarke, whose work formed the basis of the *Treasure hunt* exercise. Special thanks are due to Gayle Rubin for allowing us to develop her *Charmed circle* for training purposes (Chapter 2) and to Keren Smedley for piloting some of the materials.

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We are particularly indebted to Jane Hobden, our editor, who has sensitively guided this manual through its final stages.

Finally we owe a great debt of thanks to other friends, colleagues, students and participants, who have explored the concept of sexuality with us throughout the years.

'The belly's hunger gives no clues as to the complexities of cuisine. The body, the brain, the genitalia, and the capacity for language are all necessary for human sexuality. But they do not determine its content, its experiences or its institutional forms.'

Gayle Rubin, 'Thinking sex: notes for a radical theory of the politics of sexuality' in Carole S Vance (ed) *Pleasure and danger: exploring female sexuality* (2nd edition), Pandora Press, 1990.

'We know that if our species has any worth or beauty it lies in its diversity, and our capacity to embrace and celebrate all our variously consenting states of desire.'

Simon Watney, *Policing desire: pornography, AIDS and the media*, Methuen, London, 1987.

'Genitals are the given: what we do with them is a matter of creative invention; how we interpret what we do with them is what we call sexuality'.

Michele Aina Barole, *Body politic/body pleased*, Frontiers, 1986.

Foreword

Since it was set up in 1973, the Education and Training Department of the UK Family Planning Association has run sexuality training workshops for thousands of people working in the caring professions. Few have been specialists in this field. Rather they are people who acknowledge sexuality as an aspect of life. They recognise that as professionals they are in a potentially powerful position to influence, positively or negatively, the sexual lives of others.

The assumption underlying this training is that we are all people (as well as professionals) and as such are sexual beings whose personal experiences, attitudes and values influence our professional lives. The emphasis of this style of training is on personal exploration and awareness-raising as *essential prerequisites* to professional work in the area of sexuality.

The development of the FPA Education and Training Department's work has been reflected in its training resources, including *Sharing*, *Options for change*, *Working with uncertainty*, *School sex education: why, what and how* and *Working with the 'unthinkable'*. As one of the most recent in this series, *Sexualities* reflects some of the changes which have occurred in the area over recent years. Sadly, one such change has been the emergence of a global pandemic – HIV infection. The predominantly sexually transmitted nature of this infection has once again highlighted the inadequacy of, and continued need for, professional training in the field.

January 1992

Preface

Instead of taking as a starting point the notion of a singular sexuality located within the human body and considering variations upon that theme, we believe that it is more productive to consider the notion of *sexualities*: products of the complex and dynamic interaction between our capacity for desire, pleasure, imagination and communication, and the mores of the societies in which we live. In so doing we have drawn upon our own personal experience and professional work. These have been heavily influenced by a growing body of literature which is more sociological than psychological or medical in nature and which includes feminist research and the emergent field of gay and lesbian studies.

We make no apology for this clear bias. We wish to redress a balance and in so doing to challenge long-held assumptions about sexuality. It is not our intention to provide 'answers' to the many questions raised. Rather we hope to offer alternative ways of framing the questions.

The following introduction places the structure of the manual in the context of our own experience of training. All of us do well to reconsider our work as trainers in the light of fundamental issues and we hope that *Sexualities* provides an insight into our perspectives and an opportunity for personal reflection. Whilst for some these starting points will be new, we hope all users of the manual will find it challenging.

Ewan McKay Armstrong
Peter Gordon
January 1992

Using the manual

The manual's aim

The manual is intended as an advanced resource for experienced trainers working in the field of sexuality.

Many professionals feel utterly deskilled when confronted with issues relating to sexuality in the course of their work. With the exception of specialised areas such as psychosexual counselling or sex therapy, we do not believe that there are skills specific to work in the field. Rather there are general skills in communication, counselling and facilitation which are relevant to any work with people.

However few professionals in their initial training are provided with an opportunity to explore sexuality in a structured and supportive way and can easily mistake their own beliefs and values for a universal system shared by all.

Sexualities is designed to assist experienced trainers in providing such opportunities, the emphasis being on information and issues, exploring attitudes and values and developing general communication skills.

All training materials, particularly potentially powerful exercises such as those presented here, can be dangerous tools in inexperienced hands. **We strongly recommend that this manual is used only by experienced trainers** who are familiar with groupwork methods and techniques and who are committed to an experiential approach similar to that described in other publications produced by the FPA Education and Training Department.

More fundamentally we assume that users will have explored these issues for themselves and that they will have a commitment to their own personal development in this exciting and challenging field.

Who is the manual for?

Sexualities has been produced for those whose work involves training or educating others in the area of sexuality. It is relevant therefore to trainers of:

- teachers, youth workers and anyone involved in sex education
- health, social and probation service staff whose work involves contact with clients
- people working in the area of HIV infection
- family planning staff or those who work in sexually transmitted disease clinics.

Content

The manual considers three different aspects of sexuality:

sexual behaviours
sexualities and laws
sexual identities

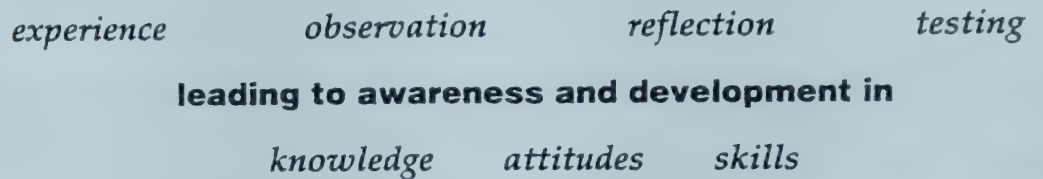
A further chapter looks at the *application* of learning to the work setting.

In preparation for more intense consideration of these areas the first chapter, *Getting started* provides exercises designed for general sexuality awareness.

A bibliography at the end of the manual suggests useful background material in preparing for a course and gives full references to literature referred to in the text.

Process

The model below gives trainers a useful framework for addressing each part of the learning process.



Clarifying a knowledge base requires us to ask simply 'What is it (we are referring to)?'. This may be interesting but of little intrinsic value without due consideration of people's attitudes; 'What does it mean (to me/to the other participants/to other people)?'. Finally, we need to develop skills (the often neglected 'so what?' of experiential learning) if we are to turn learning into practice in our personal and/or professional lives.

This manual is concerned primarily with knowledge (ie information/issues) and attitudes since we believe that this exploration is an essential prerequisite for working in the field of sexuality. The relevance of general communication skills to work in this area is demonstrated by the final exercise in each chapter.

Each chapter consists of:

- i) an *introduction* offering a brief rationale;
- ii) a section on *information and issues* including a quiz which provides an opportunity to consider relevant points, to clarify misconceptions and to reveal attitudinal issues (research used to support the text is clearly marked and referenced);
- iii) a section on *feelings and attitudes*, including exercises through which participants can explore and clarify their own feelings, values and attitudes;
- iv) a section on *communication* demonstrating the importance of these particular skills to professionals working in the field of sexuality.

Each of the exercises is laid out as follows: *notes* explaining the purpose of the exercise and any special points for consideration; *method* explaining how to conduct the exercise; and *processing* highlighting key points and questions to raise in the discussion of the exercise.

Cultural issues in training

It is essential in conducting any training, but especially in the field of sexuality, that as a trainer you are both aware and sensitive to the needs of members of different groups.

This is of critical importance both in terms of *who* runs the session, *what* they do (including *what* materials they use) and *how* the session is run.

This manual is as much about differences as it is about sexualities. It is therefore important that differences are recognised and respected as realities for participants and trainers alike. In recognising and respecting differences you may need to offer opportunities for participants sharing a common identity to work together.

Bearing this in mind, it is important to recognise that while there are definite differences in terms of sexuality between cultures, there may also be differences within cultures, determined for instance, by age, gender, class and sexual identity.

Racism has had a considerable impact upon the way in which sexuality is constructed and addressed within British culture. Black people are sexually stereotyped in terms of their attributes, beliefs or behaviour and are rendered invisible in mainstream representations of sexuality. Similarly the values and beliefs of other cultures are given little serious consideration.

If sexuality awareness training has among its aims, as we believe it does, developing respect for the sexuality of others and the challenging of discrimination, then we must ensure that as trainers we model this.

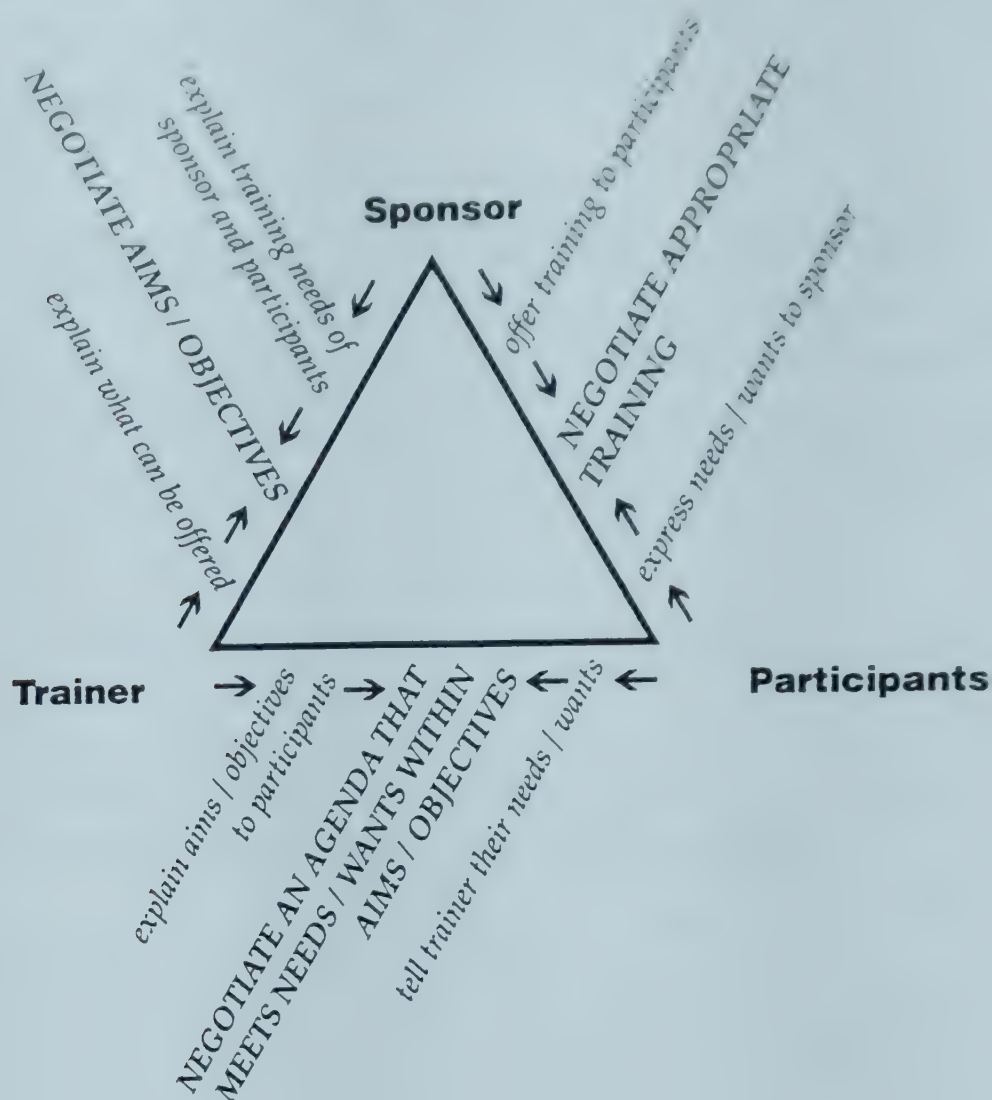
The topics and constructs considered within this manual are culturally specific in that they reflect a way of thinking about sexuality that is specific in time and place. However, even within their culture of origin they are likely to be controversial and by no means universally accepted.

In addition to providing specific content relating to sexuality, this manual demonstrates a method of training on sexuality. For work in other cultural settings the content will require adaptation to achieve relevance; the methods are potentially universal.

Negotiating training

It is imperative that a session is run on the basis of clearly stated aims and objectives in order that participants have the opportunity to contract into (or out of) the session, and in order that the session can be evaluated appropriately (see *Evaluation*, p.15). It is not unusual for sponsors to request training on the basis of what they think the needs of participants are without first consulting with them. This usually leads to a roomful of angry participants, a frustrated trainer and a disappointed sponsor. This can be avoided by clear and careful negotiation, if possible with the participants themselves.

It is useful to conceptualise training in terms of a triangle:



If any side of the triangle has not been carefully negotiated there is a potential problem which may manifest itself on a course. This can lead to a waste of valuable time and frustration for all concerned.

Conducting training / running courses

In addition to a negotiated set of aims and objectives, there needs to be opportunity for the expressed needs of participants to be responded to within the agreed parameters. The focus of this style of training is participant-centred rather than trainer-centred.

It is essential that you recognise the difficulties people experience in talking about sexuality and design each course with this in mind. It may be very tempting for participants at the beginning of a course to emphasise their professional needs at the expense of their personal agendas. Therefore it may be necessary to emphasise that the session or course will be addressing both.

Working in the field of sexuality is like walking through a minefield blindfolded as one manoeuvres between encouraging personal exploration and respecting people's right to their own boundaries and privacy. We strongly recommend that you 'practise what you preach' and participate in training courses yourself before running them.

Exploring sexuality, however tentatively, can leave participants feeling vulnerable or distressed, particularly if they are reminded of traumatic

events or experiences. For this reason we advise you to consider the risks involved in working alone. What would you do, for instance, if a participant became distressed and in need of individual attention? Wherever possible we recommend that you work in pairs.

Climate-building at the beginning of a course is essential. People need time to get to know each other and to create a trusting atmosphere in the group if they are to explore an issue as potentially threatening as sexuality. Similarly, towards the end of a course people need time to complete 'unfinished business' and to turn their attention to the ways in which they will turn learning into action.

Here is a good rule of thumb:

Never ask participants to experience an exercise you have not experienced yourself and do not assume that because you have done it others should or can.

A word on derolling – do. This simply means giving participants time and ways to come out of a role they have taken on during an exercise. Get them to reintroduce themselves to someone else, and to focus on an aspect of their real life, preferably a pleasant aspect, to shake off the role from the exercise. For example, ask participants to tell someone about what they are looking forward to after the course, in the near future, about a favourite food, hobby, etc.

Practical issues

On any course it will be necessary to have a room large enough for everyone to sit in a circle and with enough private space to divide into smaller groups when necessary. The room should be free from interruptions and well ventilated. This is of course to state the ideal and trainers often find themselves working against their environment. It is important if possible to avoid this.

If anyone else will be using the room between sessions make sure that any material produced by participants (eg flipchart sheets) is removed from the walls to ensure confidentiality and to avoid offending someone not on the course.

Confidentiality

It is essential that a clear unambiguous contract is made concerning disclosures made during a training course on sexuality. This should be agreed and accepted by everyone and may need to be restated at appropriate points throughout the course or session.

One definition incorporating two elements for which participants are invited to take responsibility may be a useful starting point:

- when I hear a contribution, I must remember that the contributor may wish this to be kept just to ourselves in this pair/group – I may want to ask them if I am unclear about this;
- when I contribute something that I would like to be kept confidential, I should try to remember to make clear what I mean by this.

Often, when time is available, the process of coming to a working understanding of confidentiality (and other groundrules/learning conditions) within a group is as important as the definition itself.

Self-disclosure

In training on sexuality it is almost inevitable that assumptions will be made by participants regarding the sexuality of others, including the trainers. It is useful to anticipate this by considering beforehand the extent to which, if at all, you intend to reveal information (directly or indirectly) concerning your own sexuality. In reaching a decision it may be useful to consider whose needs will be met by disclosure or silence and the possible impact of each upon participants.

Evaluation

It is often said that evaluation should be built in at the beginning, not left to the end. Just as often, this is not done. One reason for this may be the mystique which still surrounds the word 'evaluation' and which hinders its integration in many settings. Evaluation can be demystified by considering it simply as another aspect of the educational processes in which you are already involved when organising and running courses. It is something which you can tap into in various ways and at different stages as you learn the importance of reflecting on the content and process of education and training.

The aims of courses vary enormously, but many *educational* interventions can be considered in trying to balance the three overlapping areas that we have discussed:

Knowledge – what is it?

Attitudes – what does it mean?

Skills – so what?

Training interventions should also recognise these areas of debate. The weakest often do not consider adequately how participants feel about issues and what meanings they bring to them, whilst concentrating on either 'facts' alone or highly specific skills.

Getting this balance right is itself a skill, requiring clear contracting, as already discussed, and explicit aims and objectives, to be agreed upon by all parties *before* the course begins. Agenda-building at the start of a course then becomes fine-tuning, ensuring that participants know what is on offer (and what is not) and allowing priorities to be identified in the terms of the course's objectives.

Evaluation is first and foremost a measure of how far these are being or have been achieved. You should not wait until a course has ended before evaluating it. On-going evaluation allows you to check that you are on the right track and that any dissatisfactions are raised early rather than building up during a course only to surface as major, unresolvable problems at the end (or even later). What you must ask is not 'Am I/are we giving everyone what they want?' but 'Am I/are we providing good enough opportunities for participants to achieve the stated objectives?'; this can be reviewed in light of subsequent evaluations at the end of a course or some time after.

Post-course evaluations


All parties involved in the original contract should be asked: their opinion about the success of the course, what they have found most/least useful *so far*, how well specific objectives were met, about any unexpected outcomes, and for general comments. Ideally this information should be collated and circulated as soon as possible to inform other courses, and as feedback to trainers, sponsors and participants where practical and appropriate.

In general terms, where a rating scale is employed to measure how far specific objectives have been met, it is important not to assume that 'top marks' always make the best evaluation. Our own experience in this area suggests that middle ratings across the range of participants can be relied upon in a way that 'excellent' ratings often cannot, particularly when the latter are accompanied by comments like 'Thank you both – I had a really comfortable, enjoyable day out'! Only qualitative data will give you clues as to the *meaning* of the rating scale for individual participants and groups.

Training courses do not exist in isolation, and therefore they should not only be evaluated in their own terms. Just as the contracting process described above encourages different parties to make explicit their needs, so they should be encouraged to take responsibility for designing evaluative components which aim to assess the value of training courses within their own context. This could, for example, relate to organisational policies, cost-benefit analyses and quality assurance. All parties might also be encouraged to bring as wide a range of evaluative components together: the whole is usually greater than the sum of the parts.

Ultimately, it is important to ensure that something positive is done with your evaluation data, otherwise evaluation will remain shrouded in mystique and your data will represent, at best, a personal record and, at worst, lip-service. You may even find yourself on the receiving end of the educational challenge:

*'So you have collected **information** and you know what it **means** to participants; so what?'*



Getting started

Introduction

Having established a need to explore the issue of sexuality we must find a way to begin. To do this we have included the exercises in this section dealing with climate-building, agenda-building, ground rules/learning conditions.

These activities, each of which is important in its own right, contribute to the process of a group and form the basis upon which personal exploration of sexuality can be built.

Climate-building

In order for people to begin to explore what can be a personally challenging area it is essential to spend sufficient time on climate- building – creating an atmosphere which facilitates such exploration. Participants will need time to get to know each other, to establish what it is they want from the course, and to agree the basis of how they intend to work together as a group. This will be important regardless of the length of the session or course.

There are numerous ways of getting participants to introduce themselves; here are four examples:

Pairs introduction

Ask participants to find someone they do not know and to spend a few minutes telling each other some things about themselves (eg their name), and something they would like others in the group to know about them. Ask each pair to find another pair with whom they are to repeat this exchange. Then ask participants to go around and repeat this with the whole group.

Name graffitti

Place sheets of coloured paper in the middle of the floor together with coloured felt-tip pens. Explain to participants that you would like them in turn when they feel ready, to take a pen and write their first name on the paper and say something about it: for example what they like about their name, what they like to be called etc. You should begin and model this exercise. When all the names are on the paper these should be displayed (eg stuck on the wall) for future reference. It also helps trainers to remember the names of participants.

What nobody knows about me

This is a useful exercise when people already know each other. Ask participants to go around and say who they are and something about themselves which nobody in the group knows about them.

What we want to know about each other

Ask participants to generate a list of things they would like to know about each other. As they do so, write them onto a flipchart. Depending on the size of the group the next part of the exercise can be done either in plenary or in small groups.

Ask participants in a round to introduce themselves covering the topics from the list with which they feel comfortable. This exercise, particularly when conducted in small groups, can help to develop the sense of intimacy a group will need to explore sexuality.

Agenda-building

It is important at the beginning of a course to clarify why participants are attending. It is not unusual for participants to be 'sent' on a course by a manager who either thinks they 'need' it, or who has a specific task in mind for them when they have completed the course or session – running a workshop with young people on sexuality and relationships or designing a sex education programme for adults with learning difficulties for instance.

There are several ways to do this and these are available in more general handbooks on training. However it is important whichever is chosen that it allows participants to identify both their *personal* and *professional* agenda, that it can be contrasted with the stated aims and objectives of the course or session, and that it acknowledges external pressures to attend (or not) the course or session. It is also useful to combine asking what participants want from a course with asking what they will contribute, emphasising that this style of learning is based on mutual respect and sharing.

In addition to clarifying what participants want from the course, it is also useful to identify specifically what it is that they want or need to do in their work as a result of attending the course. This will help you in designing the application session towards the end.

Ground rules / learning conditions

If a group is to work effectively and learn together it needs to have a shared understanding and ownership of the climate of learning. Identifying ground rules or learning conditions is also useful in helping a group to form and begin working together.

As with agenda-building there are several ways to do this. Whichever is chosen it is important that participants themselves decide the rules by which they wish to work and which are acceptable to the whole group. This can be stuck on the wall and the invitation extended to alter these as the course or session progresses. Some examples which you may wish to draw to the attention of participants include:

confidentiality (and what this means in the context of the course or session)
smoking
punctuality
the right to 'pass'
the opportunity to take risks
the right to challenge
making 'I' statements

Alternatively it might be helpful to explain to participants that rather than talking of 'rules' which imply penalties if infringed, it is usually more helpful to think in terms of the 'conditions' which need to exist within the group if it is to be able to get on with the task which has brought it together.

Sexuality is an area about which people have strong feelings and opinions. Many people who work in the field have a political commitment to it as well as a personal one. This should be acknowledged and respected. However there is sometimes a danger that such commitment can make people unwilling or unable to challenge themselves or allow themselves to be challenged by others.

There is also a danger that a course or session will be experienced and dealt with exclusively at either an intellectual or an emotional level. In our view effective training addresses both. Experiential training encourages people to experience (feel), reflect (think), experiment (do) and develop theories (understand).

It is therefore essential to explain this style of working at the start of any course and to ensure that people are willing to 'contract' into it. In the ground rules or learning conditions it is important to discuss this notion of allowing ourselves to be challenged emotionally and intellectually. Raising this, in itself, models the notion of challenging.

Participant support

When dealing with an issue as potentially emotive as sexuality it is important to recognise the need for personal support for participants during a course or session, and the possible need for longer term support afterwards (eg in response to issues which have emerged during a course).

In terms of long term support it is important that you are aware of potential referral agencies. You also need to be able to facilitate a group to 'contain' any distress which emerges during a course. Occasionally participants can become very distressed and may need some intensive support from a trainer before they can resume their participation in the course. For this reason it is useful to have counselling skills and for this type of training to be conducted by two trainers. This also provides a mechanism for trainer support.

When participants have had sufficient time to get to know each other in more than a superficial way it is usually appropriate to suggest the idea of support, either in pairs or small groups. These should meet regularly throughout the course and time should be built in to the course to accommodate them. This ensures that participants' personal development is respected. It is especially important that time is made available towards the end of each day (or session on a shorter course) so that people can prepare themselves for returning to their everyday lives.

Approaching sexuality

The following two exercises provide a useful 'bridge' between climate-building and tentative exploration of sexuality when you judge that the climate in the group is safe enough to encourage some personal disclosure.

Issues and information

EXERCISE

Fruit salad

Notes

Explain to participants that this exercise is an 'energiser' and it is also about making some tentative steps towards self-disclosure. Emphasise that participants should only make disclosures with which they feel comfortable.

Method

- 1 Ask everyone to stand up and remove one chair from the group so that there is one chair too few.
- 2 Begin the exercise by saying that whoever is in the middle of the room must make a statement which is true for them and which is likely to be true for others. For example they could begin their statement 'All those who ... change chairs'. All those for whom this statement is true then change chairs immediately and as quickly as possible. The person left in the middle calls out the next statement. The first handful of statements should be non-sexual to get participants moving. For instance they can relate to appearance: 'All those with brown eyes...'
- 3 When the atmosphere is more relaxed encourage participants to make statements relating more explicitly to sexuality. You may wish to give some examples: 'Everyone who is married change chairs' or 'Everyone not wearing a bra change chairs'. Repeat several times using different statements and individuals.

Processing

- How did you feel when the exercise began?*
- How do you feel about the disclosures you and others made*
- How did you feel when the exercise ended?*
- What do you think the exercise did for the group?*

EXERCISE

Treasure hunt

Materials

Pens and slips of paper

Notes

Before beginning the exercise check with participants that they understand the difference between 'open' and 'closed' questions – if not, explain the difference.

Method

- 1 Give each participant a slip of paper and ask them to think for a moment and write down an amusing or light-hearted sexual event that they have experienced and are willing to disclose to others.
- 2 Gather all the pieces of paper in to the middle of the floor and ask participants to select one (not their own). Explain that everyone is to mill around the room talking to each other, the task being to find the author of the piece of paper. However they are to do this by asking only 'open-ended' or indirect questions.

Processing

How did you feel when the exercise began?

How did you feel when it ended?

How did you find having to use only open-ended questions?

What did it teach you about your own style of communication?

What do you think the exercise did for the group?

Talking about sexuality

These two exercises can be used to help a group to begin to discuss sexuality together.

✓ EXERCISE

Materials

Pens and flipchart paper

Notes

This exercise provides an opportunity for participants to begin to explore sexuality in a non-threatening way. It also demonstrates the lack of consensus regarding the meaning of sexuality.

Method

1 Divide participants into threes and fours and give each small group a piece of flipchart paper. Ask them to discuss and agree a mutually acceptable definition of *sexuality* which does not contain the words *sex* or *sexual* and which they will then share with the whole group. (If numbers permit it can be useful to do this in single sex groups to highlight possible gender differences in the meanings of sexuality).

Allow up to half an hour

Alternatively this exercise can be done in pairs initially, before asking pairs to form fours and then eights at each stage of the process amending their definition accordingly.

2 Definitions should finally be read out by each group and discussed. Common themes/issues/terms should be elicited and listed.

Processing

Might your definition exclude anyone (intentionally or unintentionally)?

If so, did you do this deliberately?

How did you experience the activity?

What was it like to discuss sexuality in this way?

Were there any gender issues which arose in the groups?

What common themes emerged from the large group discussion?

What else did you discuss as you tried to agree your definition?

What implications are there from this exercise for your work?

EXERCISE

Language and sex*Materials*

Pens and flipchart paper

Notes

The purpose of this exercise is to familiarise participants with different sexual languages and to establish levels of comfort with each. The exercise also provides an opportunity to explore ways in which cultural attitudes towards sexuality are revealed by language.

Method

1 Before introducing the exercise prepare four sheets of flipchart paper each headed with one of the following:

male sexual organs

female sexual organs

sexual behaviour

sexual orientation

2 Explain the purpose of the exercise to participants before dividing them into small groups and giving each group a flipchart sheet and pen.

3 Ask participants to brainstorm all the words they have heard of to describe the activity, people or object on the sheet they have been given. After a few minutes rotate the sheets or add another sheet, and continue until all the sheets have been seen and written on by all the groups. Stick the sheets on the walls.

4 Ask participants to get up and look at all the sheets on the wall for a few minutes. Give permission for people to seek clarification of any terms with which they are unfamiliar.

5 Ask people to choose one word with which they are uncomfortable or which they do not like. When they have all done this ask them 'What does ... mean to you?' and 'How does ... feel to you?'. Make clear to participants that the purpose of this part of the activity is to get as many responses as possible. They are to ask both questions and listen to the replies. They are not to get involved in conversations.

6 When they have completed this part of the exercise ask participants to return to their small groups and consider the questions below.

Processing

Did anyone's responses surprise you and if so why?

Has your reaction to the word you chose changed at all and if so why?

Which of these words do you personally find acceptable/unacceptable?

What do these words reveal about cultural attitudes towards sexuality and gender?

What do these words suggest/reveal to you about power and sexuality?

Is there anything you would like to be different about your reaction to these words?

In what specific contexts can you imagine these words being used (eg doctor-patient, adult-child, same sex, etc)?

Which words would you use in your work and why?

Personal exploration

The following three exercises provide participants with an opportunity to explore the development and meaning of sexuality in their own lives. This requires a considerable level of trust, at least between pairs. Each exercise provides an opportunity for personal reflection, representation on paper and sharing with a partner.

It is essential to remember that for many people sexuality is an unexplored aspect of their lives and these exercises can raise distressing issues for participants. It is therefore essential that you leave enough time to deal with these issues and that you feel competent to facilitate the group and handle feelings triggered by the exercise. The support pairs or small groups established earlier in the course or session can be extremely beneficial at this point.

Following your introduction to the exercise it is less disrupting if participants select their partner before beginning the exercise, so time (and possibly a method) should be made available for choosing partners. If support partners have already been chosen, participants may wish to use these for the exercise.

EXERCISE	Sexual snakes and ladders
Materials	Pens and large sheets of paper
Notes	This exercise uses a familiar and light-hearted game to facilitate the personal exploration of sexuality.
Method	<p>1 Begin by checking that everyone is familiar with the game <i>Snakes and ladders</i>. Explain that using a large piece of paper and a pen, participants will be asked to use this concept to represent on paper the factors, people and events in their lives which have facilitated or impeded their sexual development. They are doing this primarily for themselves and will share only what they wish with their partner.</p> <p>2 Allow plenty of time for participants to complete this part of the exercise before asking them to find their partner with whom they can share what they wish of their 'snakes and ladders'.</p>
Processing	This can be done in plenary, in pairs or in small groups and should pay attention to the experience of the exercise, its usefulness and application to participants' work.

EXERCISE	Sexuality lifeline
Materials	Coloured pens and paper
Notes	This exercise can be time-consuming as it turns the attention of participants to the personal meanings of sexuality.
Method	<p>1 Explain to participants the idea of a lifeline – a written or drawn</p>

representation of a line commencing at birth, with relevant events represented, continuing up to the present day. You may find it useful to demonstrate your own lifeline before asking participants to complete the exercise(see *Self-disclosure*, p15). For example you might say: 'This is the beginning of my line and represents my birth, the blue colour represents my sex at birth and how this influenced my parents in their interaction with me. This point here represents the time when I became aware of gender differences, and this point here when I first saw the genitals of the opposite sex and what I felt.....'

2 Invite participants to take some paper and coloured pens, find a quiet space and draw their own lifeline. Suggest a time limit of about 30 minutes (allow more time if necessary).

3 Invite participants to get into pairs. Emphasise that the time should be divided equally between the two and that each person talks in turn without being interrupted. The partner can of course provide support but it is generally more effective if one person gets all the attention for a stated period of time.

Reassemble in plenary or if it is a large group, in two groups.

Processing

This can take the form of an open-ended discussion of the exercise, focussing on either the participants' experience of the exercise or its relevance and application to their work.

It may also be appropriate to offer participants the opportunity to return to their pairs or support groups to deal with any 'unfinished business'.

After discussing the exercise, offer participants the opportunity to return to their lifelines and to include on it where they would like it to lead in the future.

EXERCISE

Sexual messages

Materials

Pens and flipchart paper

Notes

This exercise is designed to raise awareness of the range of influences which have shaped our sexuality, and to explore how these diverse influences can affect our values, attitudes, and behaviour.

Method

1 Explain to participants that if we are to work in the field of sexuality, in whatever capacity, we need to have an understanding of how our own values and attitudes about sexuality will be communicated to others not only in what we say and how we say it, but in what we do not say. We can therefore never be truly objective about sexuality, but we can become more sensitised to both our own experience and that of others.

2 i) With this in mind you may like to demonstrate the exercise as follows (again, see *Self-disclosure*, p15). Place a piece of flipchart paper on the board or wall and draw yourself in the middle. Explain to participants: 'This is me when I was born: the blue represents the fact that I was a boy and the ways in which this influenced how my parents acted towards me. This is me as a

toddler and these (whatever picture is used) represent the time when I became aware of the fact that boys and girls were different and I got the message that boys have something girls don't have. This is me at school and these pictures show the information I got from my teachers and peers about sex. This ... represents my beginning puberty and this shows my first sexual partner. I got the message that your popularity increases if you have a sexual partner. This is me at eighteen and in the middle of my first serious sexual relationship, etc'

Explain that it is often more useful to do this exercise pictorially at first as this can be a valuable way into relevant memories.

ii) Alternatively a series of concentric circles can be drawn on flipchart with birth written in the centre, and different ages in each of the circles (eg 2,7,13,18,25 etc), with participants asked to write or represent the messages they received about sex at each of these stages of their lives.

iii) Another way to do this exercise is as a guided fantasy. Ask participants to relax then to find a safe and secure place in their imagination. When they are ready ask them to imagine flicking through the pages of a photograph album with pictures of themselves at various ages and being aware of the messages they received at these different times.

Remind participants that messages are:

- not always verbal
- sometimes more powerful in their absence
- from parents, peers, siblings, teachers, books, advertising, television, cinema etc.
- begun at birth and continue till the present day

3 Whichever method is chosen it is important to give enough time for participants to complete the exercise alone before being asked to get together with their partner with whom they are invited to share what they wish of the experience. Ask participants to consider which of the messages were negative, and which were positive. They may also wish to discuss which, if any, are still affecting them today and whether or not they would like to change these, and if so how:

Processing

It may be most appropriate, particularly when there has been considerable disclosure, to process the exercise in support pairs or groups, paying attention to the experience of the exercise and the learning from it. Participants might find it useful to rewrite the messages they have received, turning negatives into positives.

It may be useful for the trainer to begin the processing by drawing attention to the fact that change is possible, and to ask participants to consider the messages they would like to give to their clients or those over whom they have influence, for example: How does the experience of the exercise affect your approach/attitudes?

Quizzes

General notes

Quizzes can be experienced at an intellectual level (what participants think) and at an emotional level (what participants feel). Ideally they should be experienced in both ways. These quizzes address sensitive issues, and questions relating to feelings are best discussed in pairs or small groups. Whilst it may be difficult to separate thoughts from feelings, it can be made explicit to participants in the initial instructions. For instance ask participants on completing the quiz to form small groups and discuss their 'feeling' responses to each of the questions, before discussing their thoughts in a larger group.

Sexual responses quiz

Materials

Copies of the quiz for each participant and pens

Notes

This quiz is designed to explore some of the issues which relate to sexuality as it is experienced, ie our sexual response. As with all the other quizzes in this manual, the accompanying notes are offered as guidance (rather than the last word) on some issues likely to be raised. Trainers should be familiar with the relevant issues before using these quizzes. Factual information is stated and referenced where appropriate (see bibliography for full references).

Method

1 Distribute the quiz to participants explaining that it is not a test of how much they know, but simply a means of raising a number of relevant issues in a participatory way.

2 Ask participants to complete the quiz alone to begin with, taking just a few minutes to do so. When they are ready ask them to form small groups and take some time to compare and discuss their answers. (When the group is larger than twelve or so, run the discussion in two facilitated groups. These should focus on each of the questions in turn, raising pertinent issues.)

Processing

When there has been a considerable degree of self-disclosure by participants it may be appropriate to ask them to complete the exercise with an open-ended discussion of the implications of the issues raised by the quiz for them personally and professionally.

Sexual responses quiz**1***Why are people heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual?*

- a) nature
- b) upbringing
- c) choice
- d) nobody knows

2*What is the first physiological sign of sexual arousal in women?*

- a) vaginal lubrication
- b) erection of the nipples
- c) erection of the clitoris
- d) increased heart rate

3*What is the first physiological sign of sexual arousal in men?*

- a) erection of the penis
- b) increased heart rate
- c) erection of the nipples
- d) rising of testes in scrotum

4*Which of the following kinds of stimulation might result in an orgasm?*

- a) fantasies/dreams
- b) clitoral stimulation
- c) penile stimulation
- d) kissing
- e) breast stimulation
- f) penetration
- g) anal stimulation
- h) oral sex
- i) using sex toys
- j) pain
- k) sensual body touching
- l) fear
- m) any of the above
- n) none of the above

5*An orgasm for a woman is characterised by vaginal contractions:*

- a) agree
- b) disagree
- c) unsure

6*An orgasm for a man is characterised by ejaculation:*

- a) agree
- b) disagree
- c) unsure

7*Sexual pleasure need not be dependent on genital stimulation:*

- a) agree
- b) disagree
- c) unsure

8*People masturbate:*

- a) in the absence of a partner
- b) with a partner
- c) at any age
- d) to be sexual
- e) to help them sleep
- f) to give themselves pleasure

8*People have sexual feelings from birth to death:*

- a) agree
- b) disagree
- c) unsure

Sexual responses quiz
facilitators' notes

1 Why are people heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual?

Sexual orientation refers to primary sexual attraction to the same, opposite or both sexes.

While this question asks about heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality most research has concentrated on looking at the 'causes' of homosexuality thereby defining it as a 'problem' rather than viewing any apparently exclusive sexual identity as equally in need (or not) of explanation. Heterosexuality is seen as 'given' and 'natural' and therefore not in need of explanation.

While homosexuality is as old as humanity, the idea of a homosexual (or gay/lesbian) person rather than acts is a much more recent and culturally specific phenomenon of the last 150 years within western societies.

Is our sexual orientation 'constructed' in culture or predetermined before or soon after birth?

Is there such a thing as a 'heterosexual identity' comparable to the gay and lesbian identities in contemporary western societies? (See Chapter 4 – Sexual identities)

Are behaviour and identity necessarily consistent?

What do we know about same sex attraction and behaviour in other cultures/historical periods?

Does it matter what sexual orientation we have?

How might homophobia make itself known?

How do you feel about people whose sexual orientation differs from your own?

What assumptions might we make about the sexuality of others?

2 What is the first physiological sign of sexual arousal in women?

and

3 What is the first physiological sign of sexual arousal in men?

Masters and Johnson reported in the findings of their research that vaginal lubrication was first physiological sign of sexual arousal in women, and erection of the penis the first sign in men.

According to Masters and Johnson in both men and women the first physiological signs of arousal are caused by the reflex vasodilation of the genital blood vessels. The male erection is caused by the engorgement of the penis with blood. For the female, the engorgement of the walls of the vagina and surrounding tissues causes a clear fluid to seep through the vaginal wall.

For both men and women, arousal can be caused by smells, sounds, touch, taste, images or thoughts. These physiological responses, as conceptualised by Masters and Johnson, follow a consistent pattern irrespective of sexual orientation.

There is a possible danger that this kind of research with its emphasis on physiological aspects of human sexuality without sufficient reference to the way that sexuality is experienced and expressed in different communities

and cultures, lends credence to the belief that sexual behaviour (what people do in response to sexual arousal) is somehow out of the control of the individual.

Furthermore this research is highly culturally specific to particular groups in the US and may bear little relevance to the variation in sexual experience within the US let alone to other parts of the world. By its very nature this kind of research is essentially 'normative' and seeks to identify similarities rather than differences. One consequence of this may be that people feel inadequate or 'different' because their individual experience does not match the stated 'norms'.

Do Masters and Johnson's findings match women's/men's own experience of their sexual response?

When does a 'physiological response' become a sexual experience?

What are the similarities/differences between men and women?

What are the consequences of the visibility of men's sexual arousal (erection)?

What are the consequences of the visibility of women's sexual arousal?

What are the consequences of the differences in visibility of sexual arousal in men and women?

Can both men and women feign sexual desire and orgasm?

Does it matter if we are like/unlike other people in our sexual lives? At what point would we suggest someone gets a professional opinion?

4 Which of the following kinds of stimulation might result in an orgasm?

In theory any or all of these can lead to orgasm. Some people prefer one kind of stimulation while others prefer a different kind or combinations. This can also vary from occasion to occasion at different stages of one's life.

Orgasm can be triggered either by tactile or psychic stimulation or a combination of the two. The brain plays an important role in enhancing sexual pleasure (eg through sexual fantasy). This also explains why people with disabilities can experience sexual pleasure even when they have no genital sensation.

It might be necessary to explore the myth that someone should somehow know how to stimulate his/her partner to orgasm.

Can you give anyone else an orgasm?

What might be the role of touch in orgasm?

What might be the role of sexual fantasy in sexual excitement?

What role might sexual aids (eg vibrators, pornography) have in relation to sexual arousal?

How do you feel about these?

How do we learn what is the best way to stimulate ourselves sexually?

'Foreplay' – does it exist? If so what is it? Why is it talked about?

5 *An orgasm for a woman is characterised by vaginal contractions.*

Orgasm is notoriously hard to describe. Masters and Johnson's laboratory research on human sexual response led them to the conclusion that there is only one kind of orgasm which is centred around the clitoris and is characterised by involuntary rhythmic contractions of the outer third of the vagina (the so-called orgasmic platform). But this necessarily only addresses the physiological element of orgasm.

Orgasm is the reflex response once a threshold level of sexual stimulation is reached. It can be inhibited by insufficient or ineffective stimulation or by difficulties in 'letting go' emotionally. The vast majority of women who have not been able to experience an orgasm can learn to do so through self- or professional help. Similarly male partners can learn more about female sexual arousal and orgasm.

Various attempts have been made (often by men) to categorise women's orgasms: from Freud's distinction between 'mature' vaginal and 'immature' clitoral orgasms, through Masters and Johnson, to the recent attempt to discover if women also ejaculate. Recent feminist conceptualisations and classifications of women's orgasms have challenged these and encouraged women's sexual self-determination.

What is certain is that the hallmark of orgasm in both men and women is a sensation which is both physical and emotional in nature and unique to each of us. Descriptions of orgasms can be very diverse. The nature and intensity of orgasms depend on a complex range of social, psychological and physical factors.

Because women, unlike men, do not experience a refractory period (during which men are unresponsive to further sexual stimulation) continued stimulation may lead to another orgasm.

Can we ever adequately define an orgasm?

What would be your own definition of an orgasm?

How would you describe an orgasm to someone who hasn't had one?

Does having an orgasm matter?

What is the difference between sexuality and sensuality?

Do you know more about men or women's orgasms? Why?

6 *An orgasm for men is characterised by ejaculation.*

According to Masters and Johnson ejaculation occurs in two stages: the first consisting of the pooling of seminal fluid inside the body; the second of its rapid expulsion caused by rhythmic muscular contractions. It is usually this 'pumping' experience which is associated with orgasm.

Ejaculation and orgasm are not necessarily synonymous. For example, some men who have had prostatectomies (ie partial or complete removal of the prostate gland) may be left unable to ejaculate, or ejaculate in a retrograde fashion (ie into the bladder). However their ability to experience orgasm

remains intact. The extent to which men generally are able to experience orgasm independently of ejaculation (and even erection) is unclear.

What is more certain is that after orgasm the vast majority of men enter a 'refractory' period (during which they are unresponsive to further stimulation). The duration of this period is different within and between individuals but as men get older this period tends to lengthen.

Whether or not men have the potential to be 'multiply orgasmic' (ie to experience two or more consecutive orgasms without a refractory period) is as yet unclear.

What difficulties might men experience in relation to ejaculation?

If orgasm for men is not necessarily ejaculation, what is it? Can men be multi-orgasmic?

Are women and men different in the emphasis they give to genital stimulation?

Are men more orgasm-oriented than women? Why?

7 Sexual pleasure need not be dependent on genital stimulation.

Sexual pleasure is dependent on a variety of behaviours, moods, environments, attitudes, expectations and social conditioning. It is important to distinguish between what each of us identifies as sexually pleasurable and the 'objective' criteria of physiological stimulation and response described above.

What is sexuality?

Is sexuality different from sensuality?

What about people with different degrees of physical disability (permanent or temporary) – how might this affect their experience of their sexuality?

Do men and women view sexuality and sensuality differently? If so why?

8 People masturbate...

It appears that most people masturbate either at some stage or throughout their lives and do so for any of a vast range of reasons.

In some cultures masturbation is considered to be an important source of pleasure whether done alone or shared with a partner, while in others it remains unacceptable and, when practised, may lead to considerable feelings of guilt.

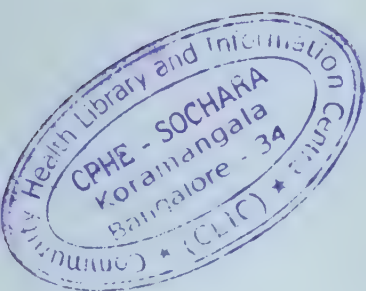
Potentially positive aspects of masturbation are that it is safe sex and it can play an important role in learning about ourselves as sexual beings.

How do you feel about masturbation?

What do you think about partners in a relationship masturbating separately?

Who is ultimately responsible for our sexual pleasure?

Should children be prohibited, allowed or even encouraged to masturbate?



9 *People have sexual feelings from birth to death.*

Children enjoy their bodies and masturbate when unhindered. People can, if they allow themselves (and are allowed by others), enjoy their sexuality for as long as they desire. However the attitudes of others around them often communicate discomfort or disapproval with the idea of sexuality and members of certain groups who are not expected or allowed to be sexual (ie children, physically or mentally disabled adults, the elderly, the terminally ill, long-term prisoners etc).

Some people report having no sexual feelings particularly following traumatic sexual experiences.

What is sexuality?

Is sexuality about having sex, being a sexual human being, or something else entirely?

What kind of things might impede the sexual lives of the groups mentioned above?

How might sexual abuse (overt or covert) affect peoples' sexual experience or behaviour?

Communication

EXERCISE

Asking open-ended questions

Notes

Most people whose work involves communication with others, particularly in relation to sexual matters, need to be able to ask questions which will encourage clients to talk. This exercise provides practice in differentiating between open and closed questions, and specifically in the use of open questions.

It is important to be sensitive to any frustration or incompetence participants may feel as they experience this exercise but to ensure that every participant actually gets to retrieve their object however long this takes.

Method

- 1 Begin by checking that everyone understands the difference between open and closed questions – if not, explain that closed questions can only be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
- 2 Ask participants to form pairs and label themselves A and B. A is to give B some money or an object they would like returned to them at the end of the session and then leave the room.
- 3 When the As are out of earshot, explain to the Bs that they are to hide this object and only to reveal its whereabouts to A in response to open questions. If the questions asked can be answered 'yes' or 'no' they are not to be answered, except to point out that these are closed questions. Instruct them not to be overly helpful.

- 4 Tell the As that their task is, by asking questions of B, to determine the exact location of their object before retrieving it. However B will only respond to open questions.
- 5 If participants begin to look frustrated by this exercise ask them what kinds of questions they are asking. If someone has retrieved their object ask them to tell the others examples of the questions they used. It may be useful at this point to point out that questions beginning 'Where...?' are open questions, as are questions that offer alternatives, eg 'Is it in this room or that room?'
- 6 When everyone has retrieved their object reassemble the group.

*Processing**How do you feel?**What did you learn about your style of communication?**What was the relevance of that activity to your work?**When discussing sexual matters, do you think open or closed questions are generally more useful? Why?*



Sexual behaviours

'Variation is a fundamental property of all life from the simplest organisms to the most complex human social formations. Yet sexuality is supposed to conform to a single standard. One of the most tenacious ideas about sex is that there is one best way to do it, and that everyone should do it that way.'

Gayle Rubin, 'Thinking sex: notes for a radical theory of the politics of sexuality', in Carol S Vance (ed), *Pleasure and danger: exploring female sexuality*, (2nd edition) Pandora Press, 1990

Introduction

The topics covered in this chapter reflect a selected range of debates and issues and are by no means intended as an exhaustive list. Use the material and accompanying notes as a model to design your own adaptations in response to the needs of the participants with whom you work. Almost every issue discussed could by itself form the content of a whole session. However the intention of this chapter is to highlight particular issues which are currently controversial.

That it has taken the pandemic of HIV infection to allow researchers to conduct large-scale research into sexual behaviour, often in the face of considerable opposition, says much about the prevailing climate relating to sexuality. Until recently our knowledge of sexual behaviour was dependent largely upon the work of Kinsey which looks at specific groups of people in the US over 30 years ago.

The majority of contemporary research into sexual behaviour is concerned with what people do, with whom, and how often they do it. This chapter is concerned not only with what people do sexually, but also with what that behaviour means to them and to society generally. Where 'factual' information is available in the form of academic studies, these are referenced accordingly. The remaining material makes reference to, and use of, current debates relating to the issues under discussion.

The exercises in this section are designed to signpost pertinent information and issues concerning human sexual behaviour, to raise questions concerning assumptions about sexual behaviour and to enable participants to become aware of their own feelings, values and attitudes.

Trainers and participants alike are encouraged to read the relevant literature and a bibliography is provided at the end of the manual with this in mind. The bibliography, which is inevitably selective, reflects an attempt to balance 'medical-based' sex research with that of a more sociological nature, including feminist analyses and emergent gay and lesbian studies which continue to pose fundamental questions about the nature of sexuality itself.

Sexual behaviours quiz

Respond to each statement: 'agree' or 'disagree'

1

Most people have had their first sexual experience by the time they reach 18.

5

Most people have had oral sex at least once in their lives.

2

Most married people remain monogamous.

6

Sado-masochism means sexual gratification through inflicting/receiving pain.

3

Men who use prostitutes are socially and/or sexually inadequate.

7

Men cannot be raped.

4

Pornography has been shown to be causally linked to sexual violence.

8

People have changed their sexual behaviour in response to the impact of HIV infection.

The quiz contains a considerable amount of information and raises many issues. Familiarise yourself with these notes before using the quiz and highlight issues potentially most useful in your work with participants.

Issues and information

Sexual behaviours quiz facilitators' notes

1 *Most people have had their first sexual experience by the time they reach their eighteenth birthday.*

The answer to this will depend upon how one defines the term *sexual experience*. The question usually asked by sex researchers refers to age of first sexual intercourse but this excludes a considerable amount of sexual experience.

Obtaining reliable information about people's sexual behaviour is fraught with difficulties (eg the question of the representativeness of given samples; convincing funders of the value of such research; the bias of researchers, by only asking about intercourse, for instance; the reliability of respondent's memory).

Apart from a general discomfort in talking about sexual matters, peoples' honesty may be compromised if the sexual acts in question are illegal. Many societies lack an unambiguous language for the frank discussion of sexual matters. For example, Wellings (1990), describing the development work of the British survey of sexual attitudes and lifestyles, reported that among a sizeable minority there were misunderstandings of several terms widely used in health education literature (eg penetration, vaginal and heterosexual sex) and that there was a tendency to attribute to unfamiliar terms meanings associated with unorthodox or bizarre sexual practices. Terms such as sexual partner and having sex clearly meant different things to different people.

However, in spite of these difficulties some broad conclusions can be drawn. Globally the age of first intercourse seems to be decreasing. A variety of recent research conducted in Europe (including the UK) and the US suggests that 40-50 per cent of 18 year old women have experienced vaginal intercourse.

A MORI study conducted for the English Health Education Authority in September 1990 reported that 48 per cent of young people questioned reported being sexually active at 16, and that 31 per cent had engaged in sexual intercourse. By the age of 18, these proportions had risen to 72 per cent and 60 per cent respectively. These figures are broadly consistent with earlier studies. A collaborative study on the socio-sexual lifestyles of young people, published in 1991 by the Institute of Population Studies and the South Western Regional Health Authority, reported that 41 per cent had engaged in intercourse before the age of 16 and reported a relatively high level of oral sexual practices.

The proportion of people whose earliest experiences of sex are as victims of unwanted sexual advances is unclear as are the longer-term consequences.

At what age do you think it is appropriate to begin sexual experimentation?

At what age do you think it is acceptable to have vaginal intercourse? What about anal intercourse? What about oral sex?

2 Most married people remain monogamous.

This statement excludes consideration of polygamous relationships.

The Hite report (1981) on men’s sexual behaviour revealed that 72 per cent of her male sample who had been married for more than two years had had extra- marital sex. This is significantly higher than figures reported by:

Kinsey (USA; 1979)	34% men – 20% women
Garde & Lunde (Denmark;1980)	13% women
Pietropinto & Simenaur (USA; 1977)	43% married men
Blumstein & Schwartz (USA; 1983)	26% men – 21% women
Sanders (UK; 1985/1987)	26% men – 30% women
Davis & Fabris (Italy; 1980)	41% men – 14% women

(Quoted in Bancroft, 1989)

Reviewing several studies conducted in recent years in the US, the Kinsey Institute reported that an average of 37 per cent of men had had at least one extra-marital partner, while for women the figure was 29 per cent. With reference to the UK, Sanders also reported that at any one time 10 per cent of her sample were currently engaged in extra-marital sex.

Many cultures sanction (either implicitly or explicitly) extra-marital sex for men, for instance by tolerating prostitution. Bronde and Greene (quoted in Bancroft), in their analysis of 116 societies reported that 43 per cent accepted extra-marital sex for men but not for women and identified only 11 per cent where it was accepted for both.

In some cultures post-partum abstinence is practised for one year or more and men are allowed to seek sexual gratification in extra marital or polygamous sex. Few societies are so tolerant where women are concerned, and for some the penalties for female ‘infidelity’ are severe.

What are the implications of this data for advice such as ‘stick to one faithful partner’ in terms of preventing of HIV infection and other STDs?

Why are the available statistics higher (except in the UK) for men than women?

Is honesty ‘the best policy’?

Why is extra-marital sex more acceptable in most cultures for men than women?

3 Men who use prostitutes are socially and/or sexually inadequate.

The relative lack of data concerning the male clients of prostitutes highlights the way in which society has tended to focus attention on those selling sex rather than those who buy it.

The term *prostitute* is in many ways misleading since it refers primarily to a behaviour, in this instance, exchanging sexual services for money or goods (whether explicitly or implicitly), rather than an identity. Only a minority of

those who exchange sex in this way would identify themselves as professional prostitutes. The question of definition is particularly problematic when the boundaries between such exchanges and other kinds of relationship (eg marriage) are less clear.

That so little is known of the people to whom the service of prostitution caters is indicative of the way in which prostitutes themselves are vulnerable to being labelled 'a problem'. However in recent years prostitutes in many countries have begun to organise themselves to challenge the discrimination they face and to demand the right to speak on their own behalf.

It is only recently that attempts have been made to investigate the characteristics of the clients of sex workers. In the UK the most comprehensive profile of clients has come from research in Birmingham (Kinnell, 1989) which reported on 300 prostitute/client interactions during 1988. This suggested that:

- between 83 -95 per cent came from the area within the West Midlands Regional Health Authority boundaries (ie they were 'local')
- at least one in 12 adult males is a regular client of prostitutes and this figure could be as high as one in five
- the mean age of clients was 41
- just under half were blue collar and slightly less were professionals/ white collar or small businessmen
- around a quarter were single
- two-thirds had non-prostitute sexual partners
- a wish to avoid emotional involvement was the most common reason for seeking commercial sex (44 per cent) while 26 per cent chose commercial sex because it provided them with sexual services which they perceived to be unobtainable from other partners (usually specified as oral sex)
- approximately 80 per cent of the sexual activity reported involved penetrative intercourse.

Kinsey estimated that 65 per cent of American men had visited a prostitute in their lifetime and that 20 per cent visited more than once a year. A more recent review of 19 sexual behaviour surveys by the Kinsey Institute reported that between 30 and 55 per cent of men had sex with a prostitute at some time in their lives.

Prostitutes from lower socio-economic groups tend to attract clients from similar backgrounds. However in some parts of the developing world, most notably south-east Asia, tourists comprise a significant proportion of the clients of some prostitutes. Therefore in some societies there is a significant difference in the social status of service providers and consumers.

The cultural regulation of sexuality may play a significant role in determining the behaviour of clients in terms of the availability of non- prostitute partners and the sexual services sought and provided. Many researchers in the western world report that oral sex is the most commonly sought activity.

Jay and Young (1977), in a large scale survey of gay lifestyles in the US, reported that about a quarter of their male respondents had paid for sex at least once and that a similar number had been paid for sex at least once.

Women who purchase sexual services (whether from men or other women) have been almost entirely ignored by researchers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that such exchange occurs particularly as part of the sex tourism industry which thrives in some parts of the developing world and that it is likely to be implicit rather than explicit, payment being made in the form of 'gifts'.

Why are clients mainly men?

How much control do you think people who sell sex have over their lives?

Why does prostitution exist?

Who benefits from it?

(See also *Sexualities and laws quiz*)

4 Pornography has been shown to be causally linked to sexual violence.

The US Commission on Obscenity and Pornography in the early 1970s concluded that it was difficult to demonstrate that pornography had any substantial effect on the occurrence of sexual crimes. In 1979 the British Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship reached broadly similar conclusions. However a subsequent commission (1986) appointed by Ronald Reagan and dominated by conservatives, concluded that 'hard-core' pornography is violence, and that this violence hurts women most of all.

Testimony presented in Minneapolis (US) to support the introduction of anti-pornography legislation in the early 1980s, relied largely on the personal experience of those affected by sexual violence (and professionals working with them) and supported the view that a link existed between pornography and sexual violence. (*Pornography and sexual violence*, 1988).

On the other hand Kutchinsky (quoted in Bancroft) argues that the incidence of rape in West Germany remained stable following the legislation of pornography while in Denmark legalisation was followed by a decline in the number of sexual offences.

The debate surrounding pornography has been one of the most controversial within the arena of sexual politics. Key issues raised include:

- defining the nature of pornography and who should have the power to do this
- the role of the state in controlling the production/display or sale of pornographic material
- the balance between freedom of speech/expression and protecting the rights and dignity of women
- difference between the definition, meaning and impact of sexually explicit/sexist imagery and language

- the possibility of a non-exploitative pornography
- gender differences in the appeal of pornography.

Attempts made by feminists in the US to invoke the law to control pornography by defining it as a form of sex discrimination, have provoked controversy and led to accusations of providing the 'anti-sex' lobby with ammunition. Critics argue that this could extend the state regulation of sexuality and its expression, with repercussions beyond the immediate realm of pornography (eg the arts).

In 1989 the US Congress adopted legislation which prevents the National Endowment for the Arts (the main source of public funding for artists) from funding material including:

'... depictions of sadomasochistic, homoeroticism, the sexual exploitation of children, or individuals involved in sex acts, and which, when taken as a whole, do not have serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific merit.'

Other feminists take issue with anti-pornography campaigns and argue that they confuse the *representation* of sexism, violence and women's degradation within pornography with their *real manifestations in everyday life*.

On the other hand 'anti-pornography' feminists see pornography as central in creating and perpetuating the oppression of women and its control and/or eradication as central to women's liberation.

(See *Sexualities and laws quiz* – section on obscenity)

What is pornography?

Who should define pornography

Is it important or not that a link between pornography and violence is researched?

What proof would be needed to establish that pornography causes sexual violence?

Are (certain) men 'naturally' violent?

Is sexual violence part of 'normal' heterosexual relationships?

At what point does sexual violence become unacceptable?

Is it pornography in itself which 'causes' sexual violence or do potentially sexually violent men deliberately seek it out?

Can we discriminate between heterosexual/gay/lesbian pornography?

Does pornography reflect or create the oppression and degradation of women?

What do you think about pornography?

Why do you think people act in or pose for such material?

What would you like to see happen regarding pornography?

5 *Most people have had oral sex at least once in their lives.*

Oral sex definitions:

fellatio: sucking/licking the male genitals

cunnilingus: sucking/licking female genitals
 analingus: sucking/licking the anal rim

Oral sex seems to be part of the sexual repertoire of most people in the western world for at least some part of their lives. How universal oral sex is as a behaviour is unclear. Confusion in interpreting research results is created by a tendency not to distinguish between cunnilingus and fellatio. In some cultures, particularly where female virginity is highly valued, oral sex provides sexual pleasure without the risk of pregnancy associated with vaginal intercourse.

The 1990 MORI study conducted for the English Health Education Authority revealed that of those who were sexually active 49 per cent reported oral sex as part of their sexual repertoire. The collaborative survey of young people in South West England (see above), reported a relatively high level of oral sexual practices.

Cunnilingus and fellatio were reported by 15 to 20 per cent of the women and men within the previous week in the feasibility study of the current British survey (Wellings, 1990).

Jay and Young's research conducted in the US before the emergence of the HIV pandemic (1977) reported that 92 per cent of the lesbians in their research engaged in cunnilingus, and that this ranged from 55 per cent who always included it in their sexual repertoire to 23 per cent who engaged in this behaviour fairly infrequently. Sixty-eight per cent had never engaged in analingus (sometimes called 'rimming') while two per cent reported always doing so and seven per cent doing it somewhat frequently. Of their gay male respondents 39 per cent always fellated (sucked) their partner during sex and 26 per cent reported always being fellated. Two per cent reported never having fellated and 0.5 per cent never having been fellated. Four per cent reported always engaging in analingus (rimming) while two per cent reported always being rimmed. Eleven per cent and 16 per cent reported rimming and being rimmed somewhat frequently.

Project Sigma (Coxon et al, 1990), a longitudinal study of the sexual behaviour of homosexual males under the impact of AIDS, found that 80 per cent of their sample who were asked to keep a diary of their sexual behaviour reported that they had engaged in oral sex within the last month making it only marginally less common than masturbation. The highest prevalence of this behaviour was found among young men in 'closed' relationships. A quarter of their respondents engaged in analingus in the previous month.

Available data on the prevalence of oral sex among heterosexual people in the US suggest that while common it is less so among older people and those in long-term marriages. Fellatio and cunnilingus appear to be equally common (analingus appears to be little researched as a specific behaviour). One study suggested that women's desire for cunnilingus may be greater than their partners' desire to satisfy it (Cole and Dryden 1988).

What is oral sex?

Why is analingus associated mostly with gay men?

Is oral sex safer sex?

Are your reactions to fellatio, cunnilingus and anilingus different? If so, why?

Why is oral sex a service commonly requested of commercial sex workers?

What risks might be associated with oral sex?

Is oral sex 'real' sex?

6 *Sadomasochism means sexual gratification through the infliction/receipt of pain.*

The popular understanding of sadomasochism (S&M) would be consistent with this definition. However it is perhaps more accurate to talk in terms of a consenting relationship in which two or more people agree for a period of time to enact certain roles (eg master/mistress – slave or 'top' – 'bottom') which eroticise a power differential between them.

This may be enacted psychologically (as in giving orders, verbal humiliation, etc) or it may be expressed physically (eg bondage, spanking or by other physical means).

The documented history of S&M goes back at least two hundred years to a time when private clubs existed for those who enjoyed whipping and birching: the 'Hellfire Club' was perhaps the most well-known of these. Sadomasochistic themes have recurred in western literature and popular entertainment ever since.

It seems that there is a difference between heterosexual and gay or lesbian sadomasochists, the latter being more organised and supported in social networks of other S&M enthusiasts.

S&M provides a useful example of the complex nature of sexual identity. Many gay men and lesbians who participate in S&M describe the process of a second 'coming out': acknowledging and declaring their sexual tastes to themselves and others.

Like pornography, S&M is a particularly controversial issue for those interested in sexual politics. On the one hand are those who argue that such relationships are inevitably abusive, based as they are upon relationships of real power inequality. On the other hand are those who would argue that the power held by the 'master/mistress' over the 'slave' is given temporarily in trust, that the roles are based on free choice rather than social realities, and that successful sadomasochistic relationships require a particularly high level of trust and communication.

It is less well-known that in many large capital cities and many other towns there are networks of bars, clubs and social groups catering to people who share an interest in S&M sex.

A recent trial in the UK (see *Sexualities and laws*, p57) resulted in the prosecution and conviction of a group of men engaging in consenting sadomasochistic sex: the judge ruled that 'consent' did not apply in this instance.

What are the issues of power and trust raised by S&M relationships?

Is S&M inherently abusive or harmful?

What popular portrayals are there of sadomasochistic relationships in cinema or literature?

What is your reaction to these?

What, if any, is the role of the state in regulating people's sexual lives?

7 Men cannot be raped.

In law rape involves vaginal penetration by a penis. (See *Sexualities and laws quiz*). This focus upon penetration may ignore the broader significance of the psychological and emotional abuse which occur more generally.

The law in the UK (and in some states of the US) does not recognise male rape. Men can be, and are, sexually abused in a variety of psychological and physical ways including being anally raped. Such behaviour is not uncommon in closed all-male institutions such as prisons. In these circumstances the rape is usually a physical gesture of asserting dominance in a strictly hierarchical community.

Less well-documented is the incidence of male rape in non-institutional circumstances. There is a growing body of evidence documenting the scale of this and attention has been drawn to the lack of facilities for the victims of such assaults together with the guilt and stigma which makes reporting such assaults unlikely.

In the US, 10 per cent of all victims of reported rapes are estimated to be male. Victims and perpetrators may be gay or heterosexual. The overwhelming majority of male rapes are committed by heterosexual men with homosexual men as the most common victim. Some rapists are indiscriminate regarding the gender of their victims.

Survivors, a UK organisation for the male victims of rape or sexual abuse, deal with around one thousand cases a year and estimate that they receive one new call per hour. Disclosures of sexual abuse average out at 2.5 girls for every boy.

Much less commonly recognised is the sexual assault of men by women. Masters and Sarrel (1982) reported 11 such cases.

People who have difficulty believing this phenomenon occurs may argue that for such an event to occur the man involved would have to have an erection and therefore be sexually aroused. Physiological response is not the same thing as consent. But the fact that such responses can occur may add guilt to the burden of an already distressed sexual assault victim.

Why is rape so narrowly defined by law?

What support might be needed by a woman/man who had been sexually assaulted?

What differences would there be between women and men in a similar situation?

What makes it difficult for people to report such attacks?

What could be done to make this easier?

8 *People have changed their sexual behaviour in response to the impact of HIV infection.*

Some people undoubtedly have changed their sexual behaviour in response to the HIV epidemic most notably groups of gay men in large urban centres in the western world (Cohen, 1991). However recent rises in the figures regarding HIV infection among groups of gay men highlight the need for safer sex educational programmes to be sustained and diversified to provide support to all, including those who already practise safer sex and others who are becoming sexually active.

Current notions of 'safer sex' were invented by gay men as a community response to the emerging impact of AIDS (before the cause was identified) and the change in behaviour began long before any government educational initiatives were undertaken.

It is not surprising therefore that researchers in the UK, US and Australia suggest that the degree of involvement with gay communities is a predictor of such behaviour change among gay men. Other social factors such as age, class, race and degree of acceptance of gay identity also need to be considered. For instance one study of 209 HIV antibody positive men in the US who had engaged in anal intercourse reported that just over 25 per cent described themselves as heterosexual. Another US study found that among users of 'rest areas' (motorway service areas) 85 per cent described themselves as bisexual or 'straight' and were involved in a relationship with a woman. Condoms were viewed by these men as an admission of HIV infection and their absence as a sign of safety.

There is also some evidence of changes in the behaviour of commercial sex workers and intravenous drug users (Becker, 1988). A study of peer group support programmes among injecting drug users in the US suggests that almost half of those reached entered treatment, that 60 per cent taught other injectors how to use bleach and that 33 per cent reported regular condom use. Such changes in behaviour among injecting drug users are not limited to the US. In Amsterdam it is estimated that between 60-80 per cent of injecting drug users had been contacted by outreach programmes as early as 1985 (all referenced in Chouinard, 1990). These changes draw attention to the factors other than individual choice which influence people's ability to practise and sustain safer sex (or safer drug use): for instance community support, degree of control over one's environment, economic incentives or lack of them, the availability of client-centred non-judgemental services, and, in the case of prostitutes, the willingness of clients.

The notion of the HIV pandemic as a problem primarily of gay men and injecting drug users has had serious consequences not only in terms of how these groups are treated but also in the lack of attention paid to, and by, heterosexual people. There is a lack of any clear evidence to suggest that heterosexual people in the UK or US have changed their sexual behaviour because of HIV infection.

Changes in sexual behaviour, or the lack of them, draw attention to the need to consider not only the behaviours which put people at risk of HIV infection, but the particular contexts in which those behaviours occur. For instance

there is some evidence in both the UK and US that commercial sex workers are likely to practise safer sex in their working relationships but not in their personal ones. Similarly some gay men abstain from anal intercourse in casual sexual encounters but practise it (with or without protection) in their regular relationship. Researchers from Project Sigma (Coxon et al, 1990), investigating the sexual behaviour and lifestyles of gay men in the UK, suggest that the factors which cause unsafe sexual behaviour cannot be understood by focusing on individuals but by considering the context of the relationship in which unsafe sex occurs. The term *relapse* is gaining currency in discussions of safer sex among gay men. The term is proving to be controversial because of its focus upon individual behaviour and the implied simplification of a highly complex phenomenon.

What is safer sex?

What is risky sex?

Why has such a change in behaviour not been seen among heterosexuals generally?

What support do people need to make and sustain such a change in behaviour?

How should safer sex education differ for those who identify as gay and 'straight'?

Have any of the educational initiatives mounted so far had any impact on you?

Which ones and why?

How do you see your own role in terms of promoting safer sex? – professionally? personally?

Feelings and attitudes

Mini sexual behaviours survey

Please note

This exercise requires a considerable amount of trust and security within a group and therefore should never be attempted until such a climate has been created. To allow for a sufficient degree of anonymity this exercise should only be conducted with groups of more than 20 participants. The responses obtained to the questionnaire should be treated with the utmost respect and should be destroyed in full view of the participants when these papers are no longer needed. As the trainer you should collate this material yourself and be competently numerate to do so.

Materials

Copy of survey for each participant and pens

Notes

This exercise provides a way of exploring the similarities and differences of sexual experience within a group. It provides a real-life example of the advantages and disadvantages of collecting this kind of data and can form the basis of later comparison on an extended course.

Method

1 Give participants a copy of a desired survey. An example is provided. However questionnaires can and *should be tailored to the needs of and issues raised by the particular group* with whom you are working. Alternatively as a separate exercise participants might be invited to devise their own questionnaire reminding them to ask only those questions which they would themselves be prepared to answer. The information sought will also depend on the nature of the particular course or workshop.

2 Invite participants to complete this in privacy. Explain that these will be collected and the results collated and fed back to the group as total responses. Where possible no individual response will be referred to.

3 When they have completed this part of the task ask participants to reassemble and discuss with them the experience of completing such a questionnaire:

How did they feel?
What (if any) difficulties did they experience?

When you have collated the results numerically, feed them back to the group and discuss. If other survey results have already been discussed in the group you may wish to compare them.

Processing

Can any broad conclusions be drawn from the data revealed?
What are the limitations of the data?
How do you feel now compared to at the beginning of this particular session?
What are the issues raised by this exercise for you as individuals and as a group?
What effect has the exercise had on the openness with which sexual behaviour is discussed in this group?
What have you learned from this experience?

Sexual behaviours survey**1***How would you describe your sexual orientation?*

- ☐ gay
☐ lesbian
☐ heterosexual
☐ bisexual
☐ other (specify)

2*a) At what age did you have your first sexual experience?**b) How do you define this:*

- ☐ on your own
☐ with another
☐ sexual intercourse

3*a) Are you in a sexual relationship now?*

- ☐ yes ☐ no

b) If 'yes', is this with a member of the same or opposite sex?

- ☐ same ☐ opposite

c) Have either of you (to the best of your knowledge) ever had sex with anyone else while you have been involved in this relationship?

- ☐ yes ☐ no

4*Which of the following sexual activities have you experienced:*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> kissing | <input type="checkbox"/> vaginal intercourse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> body caressing | <input type="checkbox"/> anal intercourse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> masturbation | <input type="checkbox"/> other (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fellatio | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cunnilingus | |

5*a) Have you ever paid anyone to have sex with you (them)?*

- ☐ yes ☐ no

b) Have you ever been paid by anyone to have sex with them?

- ☐ yes ☐ no

6*Have you ever used pornography for sexual pleasure?*

- ☐ yes ☐ no

7*Do you ever engage in sexual games involving fantasies such as dressing up, dominance and submission?*

- ☐ yes ☐ no

8*Has your sexual behaviour changed because of HIV infection?*

- ☐ yes ☐ no

9*Have you ever had a sexual experience you did not want?*

- ☐ yes ☐ no

10*Has your sexual orientation changed over time?*

- ☐ yes ☐ no

EXERCISE

The charmed circle

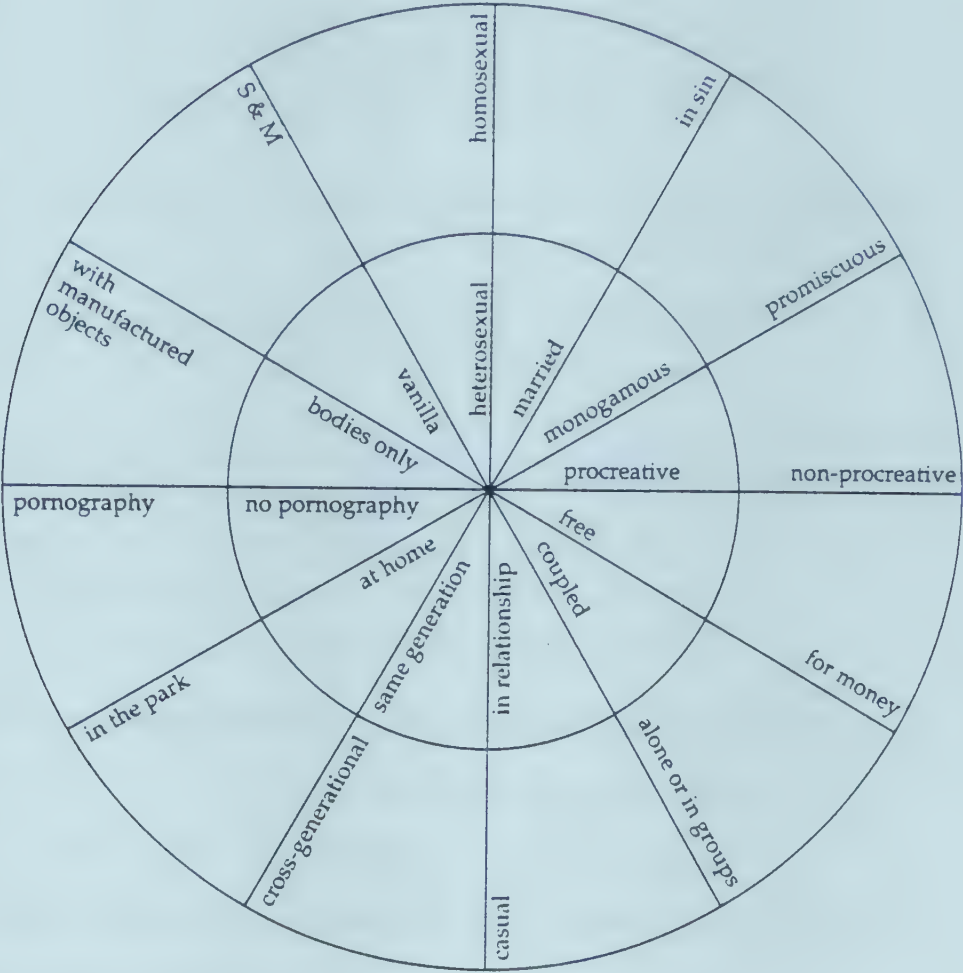
(Based on a model devised by Gayle Rubin: 'Thinking sex: notes for a radical theory of sexuality' in Carole S Vance (ed), *Pleasure and danger: exploring female sexuality*, (2nd edition), Pandora Press 1989)

Materials

Pens and paper

Notes

This exercise is designed to help participants to consider their sexuality within its social and political context and to compare the limits of their sexual tolerance with those of society generally.



The charmed circle:

- good, normal, natural, blessed sexuality
- heterosexual
- married
- monogamous
- procreative
- non-commercial
- in pairs
- in a relationship
- same generation
- in private
- no pornography
- bodies only
- vanilla

The outer limits:

- bad, abnormal, unnatural, damned sexuality
- homosexual
- unmarried
- promiscuous
- non-procreative
- commercial
- alone or in groups
- casual
- cross-generational
- in public
- pornography
- with manufactured objects
- sadomasochistic

The 'charmed circle' is a concept devised by Gayle Rubin based on the view that the control of sexuality like gender, race and class, can be used to oppress people. This model represents the relationship in western societies between the dominant sexual value system and other forms of sexual expression. Rubin argues that those whose behaviour stands high in this hierarchy are:

'... rewarded with certified mental health, respectability, legality, social and physical mobility, institutional support, and material benefits. As sexual behaviours or occupations fall lower on the scale, the individuals who practice them are subjected to a presumption of mental illness, disreputability, criminality, restricted social and physical mobility, loss of institutional support, and economic sanctions.'

In addition to a social sexual value system, it could be argued that we each have our own individual 'charmed circles' which represent the inner and outer limits of our own sexual experience and tolerance.

Method

- 1** Explain the concept of the 'charmed circle' to participants using the above diagram.
- 2** Ask participants to find a quiet spot and consider for a few minutes what their own 'charmed circle' would look like, and then to represent it on paper.
- 3** When all participants have done this, invite them to stick their diagrams on a wall or mill around with their sheets. Ask participants to find someone to talk to and consider similarities and differences between their diagrams. They should identify the one least like their own and discuss any similarities or differences with that person.

Processing

What did you learn about yourself through this exercise?

What did you learn about others?

Are all sexualities socially equal?

How has the exercise affected the way in which you think about sexuality?

EXERCISE

Sexual values

Materials

Statement and header cards (see below)
Flipchart paper and pens

Notes

This exercise provides participants with an opportunity to recognise and discuss different values as they relate to sexual behaviour and to identify the range of differences within the group. It should be conducted in small groups.

Method

- 1** Explain the purpose of the exercise. You can then use the examples of statements provided cut out and stuck onto, or written on cards. Alternatively you can ask participants to complete the following statement several times, in different ways on cards (these should be written in the first person singular – see examples):

As a way of expressing their sexuality people ... (write down one form of sexual activity or expression on each card)

- 2** Divide all the statement cards evenly among the participants asking them not to look at them until asked to do so. Divide participants into small groups and give each group a set of header cards to place on the floor in the middle of their group.
- 3** In turn ask participants to read out one of the statement cards they have preceded by the words: *As a way of expressing their sexuality people ...*, and to say under which heading they would place the card. Open it up for discussion among the group. The person whose card it is decides where it should be placed after discussion. Then move on to the next one. When all the cards have been dealt with in this way, offer each participant in turn the opportunity to move one card to a different heading.
- 4** Each small group should write up the lists under each heading on a different piece of flipchart paper and then consider how they would feel about someone else (not in their group) being told that these lists represent the sexual value system of this group.
- 5** If participants wish to they can agree to share their lists with the other groups but this should only be done with the consent of the entire group. If such consensus does not exist the pieces of paper should be destroyed immediately.

Processing

How did it feel to read out the statements on the cards?

How did the possible reactions of others affect what you wrote/said?

What impact has the discussion had upon your attitudes/values?

How did it feel to discuss these topics in this group?

Did you surprise yourself in any way during the exercise and if so how?

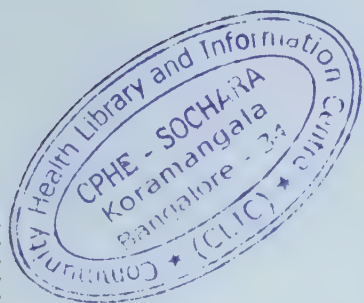
What have you learned?

Header cards

**I value these
for myself**

**I value these
for others**

**I do not value
these for myself
or others**



Sexual values (examples of statements) Page 1

As a way of expressing their sexuality, people:

have oral sex	look at pornography
have anal sex	have vaginal sex
dress up in the clothes of the opposite sex	wear rubber clothing
tie up their partner	are sexually faithful to their partner
are tied up by their partner	pay / are paid in exchange for sex
visit sex shops	share sexual fantasies with others
masturbate	watch other people have sex without their knowing
initiate sexual encounters	watch other people have sex with their consent

Sexual values (examples of statements) Page 2

have sex in order to have children	use vibrators
have sex in privacy	have sex in groups
have sex only if married	have sex with people to whom they're not married
have sex with the opposite sex	take their clothes off in public
have sex with the same sex	engage in sadomasochistic sex
have sex in public places	are celibate
have sex with as many partners as they wish	have sex within marriage
have sex with people whom they do not know	

Communication

EXERCISE

Negotiating sex

Notes

'Safer sex' has drawn attention to the need for people to be equipped with skills in negotiating sexual activity. This exercise provides participants with an opportunity to experience such negotiation, to assess the usefulness of the tactics they employ, and to consider the situations in which such negotiations occur.

Method

- 1** Ask participants to form pairs and explain the purpose of the exercise. Explain that while the emphasis is on the process of negotiation rather than content, the more emotionally laden the issue the more difficult the negotiation is likely to become.
- 2** Participants should imagine themselves in a sexual relationship. This can be either new or long-standing. They are to negotiate, in the context of that relationship, about either *safer sex*, *monogamy* or *money* (or any other potentially emotionally laden issues). They can spend a few minutes deciding the particular scenario and stances they wish to adopt. They should be clear about differences between their characters in terms of gender, age, class and power before the negotiation begins. Allow 20 minutes for their negotiation.
- 3** When they have completed their negotiation assist participants to de-role before processing.

Processing

What tactics did you employ? Describe some of these.

How did difference in power between you manifest itself and affect the outcome of your negotiation?

How did you conduct your negotiations?

Did you decide in advance what your 'bottom line' was (ie the point beyond which you would not negotiate)?

Did you discover what your partner's was, and if so, how?

Did you take time to really explore what your partner wanted, and if so, how did you do this?

How did it assist you in your negotiation to know what they wanted?

What tactics did you employ?

How successful were these?

If unsuccessful, would these tactics have worked on you?

How do you feel about the word 'negotiation' to describe such communication concerning sexual matters?

If you could do the exercise again, what would you do differently?

What have you learned about yourself from this experience?



Sexualities and laws

'Law... a rule of action established by authority: a statute: the rules of a community or state: jurisprudence: established usage: that which is lawful: the whole body of persons connected personally with the law: litigation: a rule or code in any department of action, as morality, art, honour, arms (including heraldry), a game: a theoretical principle educed from practice or observation: a statement or formula expressing the constant order of certain phenomena: the Mosaic code or books containing it (theology).'

Concise Oxford Dictionary

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with laws. For practical purposes we have limited ourselves almost entirely to UK government and case law in England and Wales* which can be and is enforced, but it is obvious from the above dictionary definition, that this represents but a fraction of the regulation of sexual life in Britain today. Within the confines of governmental laws each of us is further affected by the rules, traditions and customs of religion, class, nationality, culture, locality and our own families.

What should be the purpose of Government in establishing and upholding laws which affect aspects of sexuality? To restrict behaviour? To maintain rights? To protect the vulnerable? To uphold the values of a particular religion, class, nationality, culture, locality or family? These are the types of questions which we hope to stimulate.

This chapter is not so much about the intricacies of specific laws as about concepts of equity, individual and societal rights and responsibilities, consent, diversity and difference. The quiz is written in order to relate to people of different sexualities, the notes highlighting the anomalies and inequities in the law as it stands or is applied. The exercises which follow offer participants opportunities to explore their own 'limits' and inequities (and to consider where these may have come from) and to be practical within current law as well as considering potential strategies with which to challenge the law where they see this as appropriate.

Often it is only when a 'law' or rule has been broken, whether in art, morality or any other facet of life, that we recognise the effect it has had on ourselves or others.

*Trainers in Northern Ireland and Scotland may obtain further information from their own Health Education Board/Health Promotion Agency

Sexualities and laws quiz

1

At what age does the law recognise that someone can be a consenting sexual partner?

2

Under which of the following circumstances is it an offence for consenting adults over 21 years old to have sex?

- a) if more than 2 people are involved?
- b) if they have sex in a park?
- c) if they have sex in a locked hotel room?
- d) if they are in Glasgow or Belfast?
- e) if they are men or women of the British Forces?
- f) if they are having anal intercourse?
- g) if they are blood relatives?
- h) if one of them has a mental handicap?

3

Under what circumstances does the law recognise rape?

4

Parents must be informed about, and consent to, which of the following as it relates to their child?

- a) medical contraceptive treatment by a doctor to a 15 year old?
- b) contraceptive advice by another professional worker to a 15 year old?
- c) a termination of the pregnancy of their 15 year old daughter?
- d) whether or not sex education is taught at school?
- e) the content of sex education classes where they relate to homosexuality?
- f) whether or not their 16 year old offspring can marry?

Discuss the following statements:

5

In law, the ordinary citizen decides what is and isn't pornographic.

6

Prostitution is illegal.

7

Sexual orientation is a deciding factor in cases of child custody or access.

8

Gay men and lesbians can and do adopt children.

Issues and information

Sexualities and laws quiz facilitators' notes

1 *At what age does the law recognise that someone can be a consenting sexual partner?*

The major issue raised by this question is the discrepancy in ages of consent for men and women and choice of sexual partners. Generally speaking, the recognised ages of consent are:

- 16 years old for people engaging in heterosexual activity
- 21 years old for men engaging in homosexual activity
- 16 years old for women engaging in homosexual activity.

The latter is often assumed to be non-existent – there is indeed no direct provision for an age of consent between girls/women – however, a woman under 16 cannot, in law, consent to an act which is classified as an indecent assault whether committed by a man or a woman.

A recent police investigation and subsequent conviction of a group of men engaging in consenting sadomasochistic sexual behaviour highlights the extent to which the law can be invoked to regulate even those sexual practices occurring between consenting adults over 21 in private.

What do you think about the concept of 'ages of consent'? Do we need them?

What distinguishes consenting from non-consenting sexual relationships?

Why is it set at different ages?

How does the British situation compare with other countries/cultures?

A 1988 survey conducted by the International Lesbian and Gay Association reported that out of 182 countries investigated:

- five had legislation protecting gay men and lesbians from discrimination
- 64 did not criminalise homosexual behaviour per se although different age of consent laws existed
- 55 criminalised homosexual behaviour (usually between men)
- information was not available for the other 58

Should the law be equalized?

If the age of consent was to be equalized, should it go down to 16 for all or up to 21 for all?

2 *Under which of the following circumstances is it an offence for consenting adults, over 21 years old, to have sex?*

a) ...if more than two people are involved?

This is an offence, under the Sexual Offences Act 1967 (and equivalent, see below), where the people are men engaging in homosexual activity.

Why does this not relate to heterosexuals or lesbians?

b) ...if they have sex in a park?

This is an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 1967, where both partners are men, which states that:

'a homosexual act in private shall not be an offence provided that the parties consent thereto and have attained the age of twenty-one years.'

and also that:

'An act which would otherwise be treated ... as being done in private shall not be so treated if done -

(a) when more than two persons take part or are present; or

(b) in a lavatory to which the public have or are permitted to have access, whether on payment or otherwise.'

This has led to interpretations of the term 'in private' which would be a place to which no-one else can possibly have access. The park obviously does not fit the bill. It is interesting to note that this restricted definition of the word 'private' has compromised health education initiatives within prisons preventing the distribution of condoms to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV infection.

Heterosexual and lesbian couples are not subject to the restriction imposed by this interpretation of the term 'private'. But they could be charged with breach of the peace. Consider where this is in a secluded spot, at night, or in a 'lovers' lane'

How likely do you think that this would be imposed

i) on heterosexuals?

ii) on lesbians?

Recently, the police have chosen to charge men suspected of 'cottaging' offences under the by-laws for loitering rather than under the Sexual Offences Act 1967 (section 1, paragraph (2)(b)), because the case is heard by a magistrate and not tried by jury, making a conviction more likely.

Clause 2 of the Criminal Justice Bill gives crown courts and magistrates' courts the power, when dealing with violent or sexual offenders, to pass an extended prison sentence 'to protect the public from serious harm'. Clause 25 of the same Bill lists the sexual offences to which this applies and includes almost all sexual offences relating to homosexual men most notably, buggery, gross indecency, soliciting and procuring.

c) ...if they have sex in a locked hotel room?

This again is covered by the same provision of the Sexual Offences Act 1967 for male homosexual couples. Anywhere that it is possible for another person to have access has been interpreted as not private for the purposes of this Act.

Make a list of common places/situations which would be illegal under this interpretation – some examples might be:

- long-term hospital or residential home
- halls of residence
- a train 'sleeper' carriage
- a shared flat or house

No such provision is made for heterosexuals or lesbians.

d) ...if they are in Glasgow or Belfast?

This was the case, as recently as 1981 in Scotland and Northern Ireland for gay couples where all male homosexual activity was illegal, identical to the situation in England and Wales before 1967. This is still the case in the Isle of Man. The European Community is putting pressure on the British government to bring the Isle of Man into line with the rest of the UK.

e) ...if they are men or women of the British Forces?

The Sexual Offences Act 1967 does not apply to the British Forces, all members of which will have broken martial law if engaging in male homosexual activity.

Is there similar provision for lesbians?

Special statutes for the armed forces make it illegal for men or women to engage in homosexual contact, whether on or off duty. There is also provision for any conversation which 'does not amount to an attempt in law but only to a preparation to commit an offence.'

An all party select committee recommended in 1991 that military law be brought in line with civilian laws and urged the Government to implement the proposal before the end of the next session of Parliament.

This has been amended in many countries, most notably in the USA where Len Matlovich took the US Forces to court and won under constitutional rights. Similarly in the Netherlands the Forces recognise sexual rights for all and advertise and support lesbian and gay 'societies' within the establishment itself.

Why are the armed forces excluded from the civil law in this area?

What are the implications of this discrepancy?

f) ...if they are having anal intercourse?

The Sexual Offences Act 1956 (under the subheading 'Unnatural offences') states that

'It is felony for a person to commit buggery with another person or with an animal.'

Since the homosexual acts decriminalised (subject to the restrictions mentioned above) under the 1967 Act include 'buggery' (section 1, paragraph 7) then this act is only applicable in this instance to heterosexual couples, whether married or not. Note that the law does not recognise anal penetration for lesbians and condones anal intercourse, subject to the restrictions outline in b) above, for male homosexuals.

What do you think about this provision?

When might it be invoked?

g) ...if they are blood relatives?

Incest is only seen to have occurred if there has been vaginal intercourse, whether or not ejaculation has taken place, under section 44 of the Sexual Offences Act 1956. The Act also states:

'It is an offence for a man to have sexual intercourse with a woman he knows to be his grand-daughter, daughter, sister or mother'

and

'It is an offence for a woman of the age of 16 or over to permit a man she knows to be her grandfather, father, brother, or son to have sexual intercourse with her by her consent.' (emphasis added)

NB – 'sister' includes half-sister, 'brother' includes half-brother and 'illegitimate' relations are included.

What do you think about the wording of the act (see added emphasis)?

h) ...if one of them has a mental handicap?

Under the Sexual Offences Act 1956 it is an offence for a man to have sexual intercourse with a woman who is a 'defective', as defined in the Schedule to the Mental Health (Amendment) Act 1982 and roughly corresponding to severe mental handicap, where they are not married. There is no law specifically restricting the right of people with a mental handicap to marry. As in every case of proposed marriage, the Registrar has to satisfy her/himself that both partners understand the nature of the proposed undertaking.

Although the law only refers to woman 'defectives' if a woman has sexual intercourse with a male 'defective' she could be charged with indecent assault.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 1967:

'A man who is suffering from severe subnormality within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1959 cannot in law give any consent which, by virtue of subsection (1) of this section, would prevent a homosexual act from being an offence, but a person shall not be convicted, on account of the incapacity of such a man to consent, of an offence consisting of such an act if he proves he that did not know and had no reason to suspect that man to be suffering from severe subnormality.'

What discrepancies do you see in the law regarding people with a mental handicap?

3 Under what circumstances does the law recognise rape?

The first provision of the Sexual Offences Act 1956 is that:

'It is felony for a man to rape a woman.'

and

'A man who induces a married woman to have sexual intercourse with him by impersonating her husband commits rape.'

Under section 44 of the Act, only penetration is required and not necessarily 'the emission of seed'.

UK law does not recognise that a man can be raped. However a growing body of documentation is recognising the anal rape of men by men.

There is a recent precedent for the recognition and prosecution of rape in marriage which was previously not recognised in law.

What do you see as the difficulties facing victims of rape when trying to prove their case?

4 *Parents must be informed about, and consent to, which of the following as it relates to their child?*

a) medical contraceptive treatment by a doctor to a 15 year old

b) contraceptive advice by another professional worker to a 15 year old

c) A termination of the pregnancy of their 15 year old daughter

a), b) and c) All no.

Contraception

Following the Gillick case and the Law Lords' ruling, it is clear that doctors giving advice in good faith are not committing a criminal offence; parental rights are not necessarily being infringed and a girl under 16 may have the capacity to give valid consent. However, the DHSS guidelines, revised in March 1986 as a result of this ruling, state that

'the doctor or other professional should always seek to persuade the young person to tell the parents or guardian...or to let him (sic) inform them, that advice or treatment is being given. It should be most unusual for a doctor or other professional to provide advice or treatment in relation to contraception to a young person under 16 without parental knowledge or consent.'

On 5 August 1982, Mrs Victoria Gillick began proceedings against the Area Health Authority and the DHSS in which she sought a declaration that

'no doctor or other professional person employed by the Area Health Authority either in the Family Planning Service or otherwise may give any contraceptive and/or abortion advice and/or treatment to any child of the plaintiff below the age of 16 without the prior knowledge and consent of the said child's parent or guardian.'

The House of Lords ruled against this and upheld the DHSS whose guidelines state that whilst it would be 'most unusual to provide advice about contraception without parental consent..', *'The Department realises that in such exceptional cases the nature of counselling must be a matter for the doctor or other professional worker concerned and that the decision whether or not to prescribe contraception must be for the clinical judgement of the doctor.'*

The Law Lords ruled that someone under 16 years old could consent to medical treatment and that although a doctor should seek to persuade a girl

to inform her parents, a doctor would be justified in proceeding without the parents' consent or even knowledge provided: that s/he is satisfied that the girl will understand the advice; that she is likely to have sexual intercourse with or without contraception; that she cannot be persuaded to inform her parents; that her mental or physical health might suffer if s/he does not; and that it is in her best interests to receive the advice or treatment even without parental consent.

The new DHSS guidelines specifically include other professionals in their guidance to doctors, and there is therefore no legal obligation for other professionals to inform parents or gain parental consent before giving contraceptive advice; as above, such professionals should encourage the young person to tell their parent(s) where possible.

What do you think about parental rights?

Where do these rights come from?

What are parental duties?

Does the above apply to young people of both sexes? Discuss.

Can you think of any circumstances where you would a) tell parents or police b) not encourage a young person to tell their parent(s)?

Abortion

The wording of the judgement refers to 'contraceptive advice or treatment' throughout and does not specifically refer to abortion, but as the Law Lords (by a majority) accepted that a girl under 16 could consent to medical treatment, it follows that she could also consent to an abortion provided that the same conditions were satisfied. However practically, it is very difficult to obtain an abortion under these circumstances.

Since an abortion is a much more intrusive operation it is likely that some girls, who would be thought to be competent to consent to the provision of contraceptive advice and treatment, would not be competent to consent to an abortion. Abortion demands more maturity of understanding of the individual. In addition, the conditions of the Abortion Act 1967 have to be met. Following the amendments made through the introduction of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990, a termination of pregnancy is legal if:

- 1 The pregnancy has not exceeded its 24th week and that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or any existing children of her family; and
- 2 At any stage of pregnancy if:
 - i) the termination is necessary to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman;
 - ii) there is risk to the life of the pregnant woman, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated;

iii) there is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

Two doctors must agree that one of these conditions has been met.

The amendment from 28 to 24 weeks was made through the introduction of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990.

d) ...whether or not sex education is taught at school

The Education Act (No. 2) 1986 gives school governors the power to decide whether sex education shall be taught in school and the obligation to report to parents on general school practices, including the curriculum (see Doreen E Massey, *School sex education: why, what and how*, 2nd edition, FPA 1991). According to the DES circular 11/87, governors have the power to accept or reject parental requests to withdraw their children from sex education provision.

An amendment to the 1986 Education Bill seeking to give parents the statutory right to withdraw their children from sex education classes was heavily defeated. School governors may still decide to give individual parents this right.

What are the implications of this in practice?

Is this information generally well known, and if not, why?

One study, by Isobel Allen of the Policy Studies Institute (1987), documents the overwhelming support for sex education in schools by parents and young people alike.

Do you think that this is the case in your area?

What specific implications might there be for the teaching of sex education in a multi-cultural society, particularly in terms of equal opportunities?

e) ...the content of sex education classes where they relate to homosexuality

Much controversy has accompanied the introduction of the Local Government Act 1988, not least because of section 28 which states:

'A local authority shall not -

(a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality;

(b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family.'

In this instance, the Act clarifies that *maintained school* refers to

'(a) in England and Wales, a county school, voluntary school, nursery school or special school, within the meaning of the Education Act 1944; and

(b) in Scotland, a public school, nursery school or special school, within the meaning of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.'

Notwithstanding this effort to clarify the point in the Act, the Department of the Environment has advised that section 28 does not apply to schools, as section 18 of the Education Act (No. 2) 1986 as outlined above gives school governors responsibility for decisions on sex education in schools.

What do you think the intention of section 28 was in being drawn up in this way?

Test cases have yet to be made on the applicability of this section as it relates to local authority activities.

Is it possible to promote sexualities? If so,...

What do you think about the possibility of 'promoting' either heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality?

What is implied by the phrase pretended family?

Ask participants to list all the different 'families' they can think of and allocate them to 'pretended' or 'non-pretended'. Discuss these lists.

f) ...whether or not their 16 year old offspring can marry

In England and Wales, a couple may not marry without parental consent until they are both 18 years of age; the equivalent age in Scotland is 16, giving rise to the popularity of Gretna Green.

If they were to be equalized, which should it be?

What do you think about the difference in ages of consent for sexual intercourse between heterosexual couples and for marriage?

5 In law, the ordinary citizen decides what is and isn't pornographic.

Pornography, as such, is not defined in law. The distinction between 'obscenity' and 'indecent' is important but blurred in practice. The Obscene Publications Act 1959 relates to material which is likely to 'deprave and corrupt' those who choose to expose themselves to it. 'Indecent' material is that which is likely to offend 'ordinary citizens' who might be able to be exposed to it unwittingly. The range of materials which might, therefore, be deemed illegal is wide and open to interpretation depending on circumstances, tastes, social values and so on.

Ask participants to define 'pornography'.

What is the difference between 'erotic material' and 'pornographic material'?

How is the 'ordinary citizen' chosen or constructed?

What are the arguments for banning all pornography or for liberalising legislation restricting pornography?

In England and Wales, another law has been invoked recently pertaining to 'blasphemy' (*Whitehouse v Gay News Ltd and Lemon* (1979)) which carries a lower burden of proof on the prosecution than under the 1959 Act. In 1981, the English Law Commission recommended the repeal of blasphemy law, but this has not happened to date. Most recently there have been attempts made to ban the film *The last temptation of Christ* under blasphemy legislation, which so far have failed

What do you think about the law being used to censor sexual materials?

What is the relationship between the law and religious beliefs?

Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 (see notes on 3(e) above) makes it illegal for a local authority to 'intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality' and states that 'a court shall draw such inferences as to the intention of the local authority as may reasonably be drawn from the evidence before it.' The full implications of this have not yet been established as no case has been tested in court. But the presence of this section has already motivated some authorities and other bodies and individuals to 'self-censor' with no certainty of the need.

What do you think about this provision in law? What might the consequences of such 'self-censorship' be?

6 Prostitution is illegal.

Prostitution per se is not illegal. All the sections of both the 1956 Act and the 1967 Act relate to prostitution one step removed (eg 'causing prostitution of women', 'living on earnings of prostitution', 'keeping a brothel') which all serve to frustrate prostitution whilst not making it illegal. This serves to ensure that a prostitute's life is a very difficult one: for example, a prostitute cannot share a flat or house with anyone without this being seen as a brothel in the eyes of the law or without putting the other at risk of being seen as living on the earnings of prostitution.

Why does the law not criminalise prostitution itself?

What is the difference between 'decriminalising' and 'legalising' acts of prostitution?

Should the law intervene with regard to clients?

Should the law intervene with regard to pimps?

What should be the role of the law in relation to kerb crawling?

7 Sexual orientation is a deciding factor in cases of child custody or access. and

8 Gay men and lesbians can and do adopt children.

Lesbians and gay men have always been, and still are, discriminated in cases of custody, access or adoption. Indeed, any perceived orientation, lifestyle or other deviation from the publicly held norm of heterosexual parenthood is similarly discriminated against, even though many biological parents live these lives with no outcry. Three reasons are promoted as to why a homosexual parent is less suitable than a heterosexual one:

i) that it would stigmatise the child

ii) that it would 'make' the child lesbian or gay (and that this would be undesirable)

iii) that a 'heterosexual' home is, ipso facto, a more desirable one for a child than a 'homosexual' one.

What do you think about these reasons? (They may wish to consider them in comparison to same-race adoption policies)

Add other reasons which you think lie behind the practice of the law in these cases.

Feelings and attitudes/communication

EXERCISE	Fishbowl debate
Materials	Debating cards (see below)
Notes	<p>This exercise provides an opportunity to explore feelings and attitudes towards a range of issues relating to the legal regulation of sexuality. It also provides participants with an opportunity to consider attitudes and viewpoints which may significantly differ from their own. Participants will also experience the process of presenting and defending a specific set of views before an audience.</p>
Method	<p>1 Divide participants into teams and give them time to consider one of the debating cards reproduced below. These contain suggested positions they can take on four given topics.</p> <p>2 When they have had enough time to work through their position on one of these (whether they personally believe it or not) get two opposing teams into the centre of a circle, all other group members making up the audience.</p> <p>3 Allow 15-20 minutes for each debate, divided between role-play, debriefing and processing. Repeat as appropriate.</p> <p>One group member can be made the chairperson, to keep time and order.</p>
Processing	<p><i>Before assembling in plenary, make sure that participants de-role and dissociate themselves from the views they have been expressing if these are not consistent with their own. Finally, allow time for a group discussion about the issues raised, considering the process used to argue different positions as well as the content of the debates.</i></p>

Debating cards Page 1**Age of consent** Team A

You are in favour of retaining the age of consent and raising it to 21 years of age for all.

You can draw upon evidence about the benefits of deferring the age of sexual experience without denying the existence of childhood sexuality.

You may also wish to emphasise your desire to establish an age of consent for lesbians, who should not be ignored, and may draw on the benefits, as you see them, which gay men have received from the age of consent of 21.

Age of consent Team B

You are in favour of abolishing the age of consent completely, claiming that an age of consent is necessarily arbitrary, unrealistic and impractical.

You can bring in evidence about childhood sexuality and the deleterious effects of the emphasis adults put on 'no sex' before a certain age.

You may wish to emphasise the numbers of unwanted pregnancies below the age of 16, the number of divorces relating to early marriage, the five-year discrepancy in age of consent for homosexual men and the negation of lesbians in the eyes of the law.

Debating cards Page 2**Adoption policy** Team C

You are in favour of abolishing discrimination which prevents single people, be they lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual, from adopting children.

You can cite as evidence the many children who are brought up in families which subsequently turn out to have a lesbian or gay parent. You may also refer to studies which show the particularly good adjustment of children brought up

in 'lesbian households'. You can also bring evidence of child sexual abuse within heterosexual households.

You would prefer that the criteria of unconditional love, emotional security and positive stimulation be used to assess potential parents first and foremost. You may wish to propose a temporary policy of 'affirmative action' to ensure that changes in policy are implemented.

Adoption policy Team D

You wish to maintain the policy of discriminating against gay lesbian and bisexual single people in favour of heterosexual couples.

You believe that sexual orientation is learned behaviour and that gay and lesbian households are unsuitable environments for young people whose sexual identity may not yet be established. You do not make any value judgements about gay men and lesbians, but you believe that it is easier for people to live in this society as heterosexuals. Given this choice, you believe that it is society's responsibility to give children this opportunity.

You may also bring evidence about the need to protect children from emotional immaturity, insecurity and instability, especially where the children are particularly vulnerable; where there is any uncertainty in this area, you may claim, caution must err on the side of the children. You may wish to draw on a biological model of the family, ensuring a natural balance of feminine and masculine aspects and appropriate role-models for developing citizens.

Debating cards Page 3**Decriminalisation of prostitution** Team E

You support the decriminalisation of prostitution because it marginalises people who would be better served if they could gain access to the same legal and health rights as others.

You may highlight the success of other societies where the decriminalisation of prostitution has afforded a better control of sexually

transmitted disease and a decrease in opportunities for exploitation of prostitutes by 'pimps' and clients.

You suggest that this might also help society to face up to the presence of prostitution in society, to focus interventions on clients as well as prostitutes, and to take responsibility for the social causes of prostitution itself.

Decriminalisation of prostitution Team F

You are against the decriminalisation of prostitution, claiming that this would signal an acceptance of sex for money, would encourage exploitation and an expansion of prostitution generally. This would almost inevitably lead to an increase in sexually transmitted infections and would put others at risk (for example the wives of male clients) who, whatever their morals, are not in a position to make an informed, adult choice.

Whilst not wanting to further penalise prostitutes themselves, you see the maintenance of criminal status as an important tool in a broader strategy to combat exploitative sexual relationships which ultimately serve male values which society has a responsibility to challenge.

Debating cards Page 4**Contraceptive advice to 13-year-olds** Team G

You are calling for the dismissal of a teacher who gave contraceptive information to two 13 year olds, a boy and a girl.

You see this as highly unprofessional, irresponsible and tantamount to encouraging sexual experimentation. You may wish to draw on the Gillick ruling which, even although was lost on appeal, does not support such action with children of such a young age. You don't know whether or not the children's parents knew and gave their consent, but think that this is immaterial in this case, which is simply about professional ethics.

You may chose to highlight the serious consequences of early sexual activity; pregnancy and the possibility of abortion and the psychological consequences of both; the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection; the links between early onset of sexual activity and cervical cancer; and the dangers of exploitation of young people.

Ultimately, you want the teacher dismissed to deter other teachers from doing the same and to strengthen school policy, to direct children to their parents.

Contraceptive advice to 13-year-olds Team H

You are in favour of supporting a teacher who gave contraceptive information to two 13 year olds, a boy and a girl.

You can draw on studies which describe widespread parental and professional support for sex education in schools and emphasise that the school governors in this case support some form of sex education across the curriculum. You may wish to stress the irresponsibility of those who refuse to face the realities

of childhood sexuality and the dangers of not giving clear information and appropriate guidance when asked.

Ultimately, you want the teacher praised for timely and appropriate professional intervention. In addition, you would like the school board to support the establishment of a structured sex education curriculum throughout the school population including 13 year olds.



Sexual identities

'Sexual identity is the public representation of sensual aims and objectives as integrated into the personality'.

Rosalind Coward, *Patriarchal precedents sexuality and social relations*, RKP, London 1983

'It is in social relations that individual feelings become meaningful, and 'identity' possible'

Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality and its discontents*, RKP, London 1985

'Sexuality and sexual desire are not fixed and unchanging. We create boundaries and identities for ourselves to contain what might otherwise threaten to engulf or dissolve into formlessness'.

E Wilson, 'I'll climb the stairway to heaven: lesbianism in the seventies' in S Cartledge and J Ryan (eds), *Sex and love: new thoughts on old contradictions*, The Women's Press, London, 1983

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with two questions:

- i) Who defines your sexual identity; yourself or society?
- ii) Is your sexual identity static or open to change?

The wider issue of the consistency or otherwise between our sexual identity and behaviour is addressed implicitly throughout the rest of this manual.

Many factors shape our ideas of sexual identity. Consider the question 'Who am I?' Many different aspects of our lives must be considered when we try to answer this in any serious way. It is just as complicated (if not more so) to consider ourselves as *sexual* beings – 'Who am I sexually?'

However, it is even more difficult to answer this question if we accept the idea that who or what we are sexually might change over the years. The capacity individuals have to explore their sexual identity as they grow older, as personal circumstances or society changes, and as new opportunities arise, is something which we believe can be developed and nurtured in a safe environment.

There can be no hard and fast rules about the topic and this is reflected in the style of the quiz and the facilitators' notes. There can be little recourse to 'fact' where participants (or facilitators) may try to find refuge. This section has been placed after the other chapters to reflect the likely position of this work in the development of a course. The environment must be safe enough to allow the uncertainty of the area to be expressed and explored; this might best be done after other areas of discussion, with a more overtly 'factual'

component, have been considered. This must be judged against the values and experience of each group but it is suggested that the preceding sections on *sexuality awareness* and *sexual behaviours* may well suit this purpose.

We also suggest that this exploration is best done through individual reflection followed by work in pairs and small groups. Facilitators could remind participants that real learning can occur in this way without validation by a large group discussion or plenary. It may be worth reviewing the 'confidentiality' groundrule and to emphasise that participants' individual work is chiefly for themselves, and the extent to which this is shared with others (and with whom) is for them to decide.

Sexual identities quiz **Page 1**

1

Which of the following contribute to your identity generally ? *a lot* *a little* *not at all*

- first name(s)
- family (last) name
- gender
- hair colour
- accent
- nationality
- skin
- colour
- social class
- HIV antibody status
- occupation
- age
- degree of able-bodiedness
- other

2

Which of the following contribute to your sexual identity? *a lot* *a little* *not at all*

- biological sex
- gender
- age
- occupation
- social class
- skin colour
- nationality
- gender of sexual partner(s)
- fantasies
- nature of sexual activity
- HIV antibody status
- access to 'role models'
- experiences

any others which contribute a lot to your sexual identity:

Discuss the similarities and differences between your lists in questions 1 and 2.



Sexual identities quiz Page 2**3**

*Heterosexuality/homosexuality/
bisexuality are:*

orientations

preferences

social roles

ways of life

potentialities in all of us

Discuss the following statements:

4

*Being celibate means not having a
sexual identity.*

5

*Most heterosexually active people
identify themselves as straight.*

6

*Women prefer love to sex whereas
men prefer sex to love.*

7

*Sexual identity takes priority over
any other kind of identity.*

8

*Bisexuals want to have the best of
both worlds.*

9

*As we grow older our sexual
identity peaks and fades.*

Issues and information

Sexual identities quiz – facilitators' notes

1 Which of the following contribute to your identity generally?

The concept of *identity* must first be addressed before looking specifically at sexual identity. Where there is time a group might be asked to collect lots of different uses of the word *identity* and related words (eg identical, identify) and define them in different contexts. Dictionary definitions usually include five main areas when considering identity:

- i) the quality or condition of being the same; absolute or essential sameness; oneness
- ii) individuality, personality; individual existence
- iii) *in algebra*: an identical equation (ie one which is true for all values of the literal quantities)
- iv) the condition of being identified in feeling, interest, etc. (rare)
- v) that which serves to identify the holder, as identity card, disc, etc.

Two useful questions which might arise when the group attempts to prioritise characteristics of identity:

Which aspects are individualistic and which aspects are collective?

Which aspects are fixed and which can be changed or will change?

It is important that participants are offered the opportunity to challenge their original ideas and to question their own sense of identity.

2 Which of the following contribute to your sexual identity?

Sexual identity can be seen as an aspect of identity generally, where sex in some form affects our own or society's view of ourselves. On the other hand, sexual identity may be quite undeveloped and seen as unimportant in contributing to our identity generally, especially where individuals or societies do not value sexual aspects of life.

Groups should be encouraged to discuss why the list in question 1 is not the same ('identical'!) to that in question 2 and what the important differences are.

What issues are raised by participants in debating this?

What are the implications of any one answer being 'right' or 'wrong'?

3 Heterosexuality/homosexuality/bisexuality are ...

Jeffrey Weeks (1985) states that: '...today it is not clear what homosexuality is' in relation to these categories, but that 'the debates on these issues offer important insights into the changing meanings of sexuality.'

While it may not be clear what homosexuality is, it is more clear that the western world's perception of sexuality has changed over the last few hundred years from being seen as behaviour which potentially anyone might engage in to being a property of a type of person, ie the homosexual. Same

gender sexual activity occurs globally but its meaning and structure are culturally specific.

The results of a survey conducted by the International Lesbian and Gay Association in 1988 revealed that at least three countries in Asia, one in Africa and nine in the Americas, had emergent gay and lesbian movements. One of the challenges facing these movements is the development of sexual identities consistent with valued aspects of their own national or local culture. Another is the perceived threat posed by the existence of such movements to traditional religious and cultural values, which can lead to violent opposition.

Do these statements apply equally to heterosexuality and bisexuality?

Are the debates the same?

If not, why not?

Are the issues raised the same or different?

How relevant are western concepts for the discussion of sexuality in other parts of the world?

For the following discussion statements, participants can be asked to discuss what they think or feel about each statement (ie their 'gut' reactions), before exploring further the issues raised. There can be no definitive answer to any of the statements, and participants should be encouraged to discuss the assumptions behind their answers. Some issues raised by each statement are highlighted below:

4 *Being celibate means not having a sexual identity.*

Originally the word celibate meant unmarried. It is commonly used to mean not sexually active, a dubious assumption even when and where marriage was seen as a prerequisite to sex as it ignores solitary sex. Nevertheless, even if we focus on those of us who are not physically sexually active at all, does that mean we cease to be sexual?

Is celibacy a positive sexual identity itself or just a transitional state?

What role does our fantasy or dream life play in our sexual identity?

What length of time do you think would have to elapse during which someone was not sexually active before you could call them celibate?

What do you think about the words bachelor and spinster in relation to this discussion?

The comedian Stephen Fry has been quoted as defending his gay identity even though he is 'celibate', commenting that he has 'the right to choose what sex of person he doesn't go to bed with'!

5 *Most heterosexually active people identify themselves as straight.*

This raises the issue of assumed heterosexuality and a sexual identity by omission (ie by not being identifiable as that which society has defined as different). The term *straight* may be used to imply 'not queer' paradoxically and derogatively by people who consider themselves 'not straight'.

Is 'heterosexual' a sexual identity?

If so explain in what way? If not why not?

Can people have a positive identity when it is defined in terms of what it is not?

Do women and men have different views on this issue?

6 *Women prefer love to sex whereas men prefer sex to love.*

This raises many controversial and interesting points. Perhaps most important it raises the issue of convergence between biological sex, gender and sexuality, and the debate concerning the relative importance of 'nature' and 'nurture'. Broadly speaking this debate can be summarised as follows:

'Biology is destiny' – the differences between women and men are construed in terms of their differing anatomy and physiology. *Sociobiologists* argue that the differences between women and men are the result of evolution and adaptation to the environment over thousands of years.

Sociologists argue that differences between women and men are largely a result of the different socialisation of boys and girls and the ongoing interaction between men and women and wider cultural norms and expectations.

Cultural anthropologists argue that differences between women and men exist in all societies but these differences manifest themselves in varying ways with each gender exhibiting in some cultures attributes and behaviour associated with the opposite gender in others.

Are there some essential differences between women and men?

What are they?

Do you believe that these are primarily biological /psychological/social/cultural in nature?

What messages do women receive about sex? emotion?

What messages do men receive about sex? emotion?

How compatible are sex and emotion for women? men?

How compatible do these differences make men and women for each other? sexually? emotionally?

Would it be a sign of progress for women to be more able to separate physical pleasure from emotion?

7 *Sexual identity takes priority over any other kind of identity.*

People can and do have several identities simultaneously. How these are prioritised obviously depend upon how they are experienced. Identities which are most hard won or alternatively least acceptable to a person may take greater or lesser priority accordingly. Gender, disability, race, minority sexual behaviours may all give rise to other identities which emphasise or exist in conjunction with sexual identity.

Are some identities more important than others?

How do people prioritise their identities?

Are there any sexual identities which are incompatible with other core identities?

8 Bisexuals want to have the best of both worlds.

In recent years, the term *bisexual* has taken on more political significance rather than relating to people who are simply labelled by society according to what gender their sexual partners have been. Many bisexuals have identified as such in order to challenge social labelling, positively proclaiming themselves as different from those who identify as gay, lesbian, or heterosexual. In so doing they may find themselves unable to gain support from other groups who might accuse them of being politically dishonest, deriving benefits from the heterosexual majority whilst not identifying as gay.

Does bisexuality mean having lovers of both sexes at the same time, at some time or just potentially?

What advantages and disadvantages can participants see from everyone being assumed to be bisexual, at least potentially?

How might issues of power and oppression affect which sexual identities we adopt?

9 As we grow older our sexual identity peaks and fades.

Ageist assumptions often underly ideas of sexual activity in old age. Sexologists Masters and Johnson reported that the most accurate predictors of sexual activity in old age were a previously active sexual life and the availability of a sexual partner.

What assumptions are made about the sexual identities of older people?

What lies behind phrases like 'dirty old man' or 'game old bird'?

What do you feel about your own sexual identity as you grow older?

What do you expect in the next 10 years; 20 years; 40 years?

What positive phrases would you like to hear about yourself and your sexuality as you grow older?

Feelings and attitudes

EXERCISE

As others see us

Materials

Labels (see below)

Notes

This exercise provides an opportunity to explore the ways in which sexual identities, when revealed to others, can affect our interactions with others.

Method

- 1 Use the following list of sexual identities (and any others which your group has generated) to make up enough labels for all the participants.
- 2 Without letting anyone see the identity assigned to them, randomly distribute the cards and ask each participant to get a colleague to attach the card to their back. The group is now asked to mill about, discussing whatever they wish but relating to each other according to the label assigned to those to whom they are talking. Emphasise to participants that this exercise provides an opportunity to increase awareness of their own reactions, and therefore that it is important for them not to censor these.
- 3 Ask the following processing questions about feelings while participants are in their roles:

How do you feel?

What made you react in the ways you did to particular labels?

How did you feel about the ways in which others interacted with you? Why?
- 4 Derole participants.

Processing

What did you learn from this experience about yourself? About sexual identity?

Labels list

married woman	catholic priest
unmarried woman	mentally handicapped heterosexual man
married man	thirteen year old
married man who was 'done' for cottaging	monogamous man
unmarried man	monogamous woman
out lesbian mother	S&M heterosexual woman
gay teenager	transvestite cabaret artist
middle-aged gay man	nun

EXERCISE

Gender dialogue

Materials

Pens and paper

Notes

This exercise provides a structured opportunity for an exchange between men and women about their experience of their respective genders and sexuality and requires a great deal of trust within the group if it is to be productive. It is most likely to be successful when there are roughly equal numbers of male and female participants.

Method

1 Divide the group up into two, one of men and one of women. Explain that they will have an opportunity to ask three, four or more questions which they have always wanted or would be interested to ask the opposite sex. You will need to assist both groups to negotiate the kind of questions which should and should not be asked before they go off (preferably to separate rooms) to draw up their lists.

2 There are at least two ways to get groups to answer these:

- i) swap lists and get groups to prepare answers in the privacy of their own group, or
- ii) give each group an opportunity to 'fishbowl' the other group deliberating their responses, sitting around in two concentric circles with the 'answerers' on the inside and the 'questioners' on the outside.

Processing

How did the two groups approach the exercise? What did it feel like to do it?
Who talked most? least? How did you choose your spokesperson (if you had one)?
What surprised you most/least?
What have you learned about yourself/others?
What was the difference between expectation and reality in the questions and answers?

EXERCISE

Sexual stereotypes

Materials

Pens, paper, crayons, magazines etc

Notes

This exercise gives participants an opportunity to explore their own sexual stereotypes, and to reconsider the implications of stereotyping.

Method

1 Give participants a selection of materials and ask them to represent their own stereotypes of the following labels:

- a heterosexual*
- a bisexual*
- a homosexual*
- a sado-masochist*
- a sex industry worker*
- a paedophile*

2 After about 30 minutes, ask participants to mill about, looking at each others' representations and ask them to try to identify which is which.

Processing

How easy is it to stereotype these labels?

Which was the most difficult/easiest?

Were most of the stereotypes your own or borrowed from elsewhere? If so, where from?

What did you learn from this exercise?

EXERCISE

Sexuality awareness

Materials

a copy of sexuality awareness questions for each pair of participants (see below)

Notes

The purpose of giving people an opportunity to become aware of their sexual conditioning and/or their natural sexual preference is not in order that they should (even if they could) change it. At most it might help to foster greater acceptance and understanding of other peoples' preferences and choices.

Method

- 1 Ask each participant to choose someone with whom they are prepared to discuss personal feelings. Each pair should find somewhere private where they can feel safe enough to share their feelings honestly. Emphasise the groundrule of confidentiality which was established at the beginning of the course and the right to pass if this was also agreed.
- 2 Ask them to decide who will be listener/facilitator first (or chose who is A and who is B, directing A to be the listener/facilitator first). They will be responsible for ensuring that they each get equal time.
- 3 Emphasise that it is important for each person acting as facilitator to be aware of how open they are to their partner and for them to be prepared to encourage her/him in their deliberations.
- 4 Give each pair a set of questions to work through. Allow 30 minutes for each person in the pair.
- 5 Ask everyone to come back together, re-emphasising the confidentiality agreement before offering participants an opportunity to review the exercise.

Processing

How did you feel answering the questions?

Did you learn anything about yourself?

Did you surprise yourself?

How might this exercise affect you in the future?

How have your answers affected your sense of your own sexual identity

Sexuality awareness questions*For everyone*

What do you find sexually attractive in others?

Are these attributes common to both men and women?

Which ones are common to both?

Which ones are common to only one gender?

Which ones are common only to people of your own gender?

Are you aware of any restrictions regarding your sexual preferences? If so, what would you want to do about them?

If you chose to, how would you begin to free yourself and view your world without these filters?

For those who are normally sexually attracted to people of the same gender as themselves

When have you had sexual feelings towards someone of the opposite gender?

What were/are your feelings about sexual attraction towards a person of the opposite gender?

What gets in the way of you sharing your attraction with someone of the opposite gender?

For those who are normally sexually attracted to people of the opposite gender to themselves

When have you had sexual feelings towards someone of the same gender?

What were/are your feelings about sexual attraction towards a person of the same gender?

What gets in the way of you sharing your attraction with someone of the same gender?

EXERCISE

Materials

Notes

Method

Car park

Role cards (see below)

This exercise provides an opportunity to explore how prejudice and discrimination in relation to sexuality affect our options and choices in everyday life.

1 In a large room or open space ask participants to line up and give each participant a role card. They are not to disclose their role until the end of the exercise.

2 When they are lined up and in role, read out each of the following questions explaining that if they can answer 'yes' to that question they are to take one step forward. If 'no' they are to remain where they are. They must respond to each question. Where space or mobility are restricted, a variation would be to give out sweets or other material rewards to those who answer 'yes' to questions.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

If your sexuality was known about, would you be able to:

hold your lover's hand in public without fear of violence?

feel safe walking the streets after dark?

obtain private medical insurance?

become a judge?

obtain life insurance?

adopt a child?

work in a children's nursery?

get support from society?

kiss your lover in public?

expect support from your family?

marry your partner? be honest with your colleagues?

have the sex you want when you want it?

expect to be helped by sex education at school?

have access to affordable social meeting places?

expect to be fairly treated by the police?

have sex legally at 16?

join the army?

have your relationship supported by the church?

expect promotion at work?

expect to gain custody of our children in the event of a dispute?

Roles

a single heterosexual man	a 16 year old lesbian
a 16 year old heterosexual woman	a bisexual man
a female sex industry worker	a heterosexual married man
a male to female transexual	a bisexual woman
a 16 year old gay man	a heterosexual married woman
a male sex industry worker	a 16 year old heterosexual man
a married man who has sex with other men in secret	a single heterosexual woman
a heterosexual married man	

be represented positively on television?
expect justice?
have security in your employment?
ask your partner to family parties/weddings etc?
expect positive role models at school?
see your sexual experience mirrored in television/ books etc?
If you are better off with this label than you are in real life, take one step forward.

- 3** One by one ask participants to disclose their role.
Ask participants (still in their roles):
How do you feel about the position you are now in?
Would you rather be somewhere else – if so where?
How do you feel about the position of anyone/everyone else in the room?
Is there anything you would like to say to anyone else in the room?

- 4** It is essential that participants derole before processing this exercise.

Processing

What have you learned from this activity?
Have you learned anything specific about yourself- if so what?
What have you learned about the discrimination/prejudice people face on the basis of their sexuality?

Communication

EXERCISE

Empathy

Materials

Pens and paper

Notes

‘Empathy... is the ability to project onself into another person’s experience while remaining unconditionally oneself.’

Sheila Dainow and Caroline Bailey, *Developing skills with people training for person to person contact* John Wiley and Sons Ltd, London 1988, p.59

Listening empathically is one of the most important things we can do for others. Sometimes it is the only thing we can do. This exercise provides participants with an opportunity to give and receive support and to practise listening to others talk about sexuality. In so doing it provides an opportunity to practise a skill essential for any work on the issue of sexuality.

Method

- 1** Ask participants to form groups of three and label themselves A, B and C. They will each need a pen and a piece of paper divided into three columns also headed A,B and C.

2 Explain that each of them will have 10 minutes to talk, uninterrupted, on a subject about which they have strong feelings and which relates to the general theme of sexuality. Give permission to be silent for part of this time.

3 The task of the others will be to listen without talking, even when the talker is silent, and to note the feelings being expressed, verbally and non-verbally. Ask someone in the group to take responsibility for time-keeping and to tell the talker when there are two minutes left. At the end of ten minutes ask the talker and the listeners to turn to their sheets of paper and list the feelings they felt/heard/saw expressed by the talker. There should be no discussion at this stage.

4 When this has been repeated for each talker, ask the threes to return to each of the talkers in turn and share with them the feelings they noted.

Processing

The exercise can be processed in the threes or larger groups, whatever feels appropriate at the time.

How accurate were your perceptions of the talkers' feelings?

What, if anything, made it difficult to listen well?

How did it feel to be listened to in this way?

What, if anything, did you learn about yourself?

Did your listeners pick up on feelings of which you were unaware and how did this affect you?



Application

Introduction

People attend training courses for a variety of reasons. Sometimes they simply have a personal or professional interest in the course topic and opt to attend on that basis. Others are sent on a course by their manager because they have a specific task in mind for the employee to undertake upon their return. Some people wish to develop a certain skill. Whatever the reason for attending a course, participants will need time to consider both how these reasons have affected what they have learnt and how they are going to apply what they have learned to their everyday work.

People are sometimes unable to make the most effective use of their learning from a course because they have not anticipated the potential obstacles to this. These obstacles can be personal (eg the person loses motivation or faces resistance from colleagues or a manager) or structural (eg they do not have the time or privacy in their day to work to implement their plans).

It is therefore important to encourage participants to refer back to their reasons for attending the course, to consider what they have learned, and to make a plan of action relating to how they are going to make use of this learning in their work setting.

EXERCISE

Materials

Notes

Legitimising professional interest in sexuality

Pens and flipchart paper

Many professionals are expected to address sexual issues as an explicit aspect of their work; for instance doctors, nurses and counsellors working in STD and family planning services, or teachers involved in sex education. However many other professionals recognise the potential role they might play in initiating discussion of sexual matters with clients, but are concerned about possible resistance or opposition from colleagues who may not consider sexuality a legitimate area of professional interest.

Method

1 Divide participants into small groups (preferably according to professional discipline). Ask them to brainstorm on flipchart paper two types of situations in which they find themselves during the course of their work:

i) those in which they or colleagues see discussions with clients on sexuality as legitimate

ii) those in which they or their colleagues see such discussion as illegitimate.

2 Then ask participants to consider one example from each list, exploring how discussion about sexuality might be introduced in that situation.

3 The ideas generated can then form the basis of a role play, providing an opportunity to practise raising the issue of sexuality with clients. This also reinforces the value of practising during legitimate situations, in order to develop the confidence and skills necessary to expand the range of situations which participants might see as legitimate.

4 De-role participants.

Processing *Discuss the exercise and the issues raised for participants work.*

EXERCISE

What I already do

Materials Pens and paper

Notes A useful starting point for considering how participants are going to apply their learning in their work is to explore what they already do in their work in relation to sexuality. This exercise provides an opportunity for participants to do this and to identify areas for development.

Method

1 Ask participants to take a pen and piece of paper and complete the following statements:

In my work I support the sexuality of those I work with by:

In my work I may be hindering the sexuality of those I work with by:

I will change this by:

Ask participants to answer the following questions from the perspective of their specific role; so, for example managers should consider policy, teachers should consider materials and content of classes etc.

In my agency the sexuality of our clients is supported by:

In my agency the sexuality of our clients is hindered by:

This could be changed by:

2 Divide participants into pairs and label them A and B. A begins and reads to B their sentence completion. B's task for the next 15 minutes is to help A to be as specific as possible about how they do what they do by repeating the question:

'How specifically do you ...'

'How specifically does your agency ...'

3 After 15 minutes they should change roles and repeat the process.

Processing *On balance do you support more than you hinder or vice versa?*
How can you change this (if you need to)?

EXERCISE

What I wanted / what I've got / what I'm going to do**Method**

1 Explain to participants the importance of making a realistic action plan and of anticipating potential obstacles.

2 Ask them to go into their support pairs/groups and consider and discuss the following questions:

Why did I decide to attend this course?

What have I learned from it?

What am I going to do in my work as a result of this course?

What obstacles might there be to me doing this – in me/my manager/my colleagues/my working environment?

Can I avoid these – if so how? If not what can I do to minimise them?

What potential sources of support are available inside/outside my agency?

How might I make use of these?

3 By the end of this exercise, participants should have the beginnings of an action plan. Ask them to remain in their pairs/groups and take their aim (what they want to do when they return to the workplace) and turn it into manageable steps by breaking it down into achievable goals which should be:

Specific (not vague)

Measurable (how will they know when they've achieved it)

Achievable (!)

Realistic

Time-related (a date should be identified by which they hope to have completed this goal)

4 Suggest that participants may find it very helpful to make contact with each other to check out progress and offer ongoing support.

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Recommended journals

Journal of the History of Sexuality
Journal of Homosexuality
Feminist Review

Manual user's feedback sheet

We are always interested to know more about who is using FPA materials and how our users think we can improve and develop them.

We would appreciate your comments to the following questions:

- 1 What is your overall impression of this manual?
- 2 With which groups of participants are you using this manual? (Please specify)
- 3 In what specific ways has it been helpful to you in your work?
- 4 What, if anything, would you like to see changed (or deleted) in a future edition of the manual?
- 5 What, if anything, would you like to see added in a future edition of the manual?
- 6 In what capacity have you been using the manual; eg freelance trainer, social services trainer, further education? (Please specify)

Thank you for taking the time to respond. We will be happy to add you to our mailing list.

Name _____

Address _____

Please return to the Education and Training Department at the
Family Planning Association, 27-35 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7RJ.

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SEXUALITIES.

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